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THE KNOUT,  
A TALE OF POLAND.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER,

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PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY PETER F. CUNNINGHAM,  
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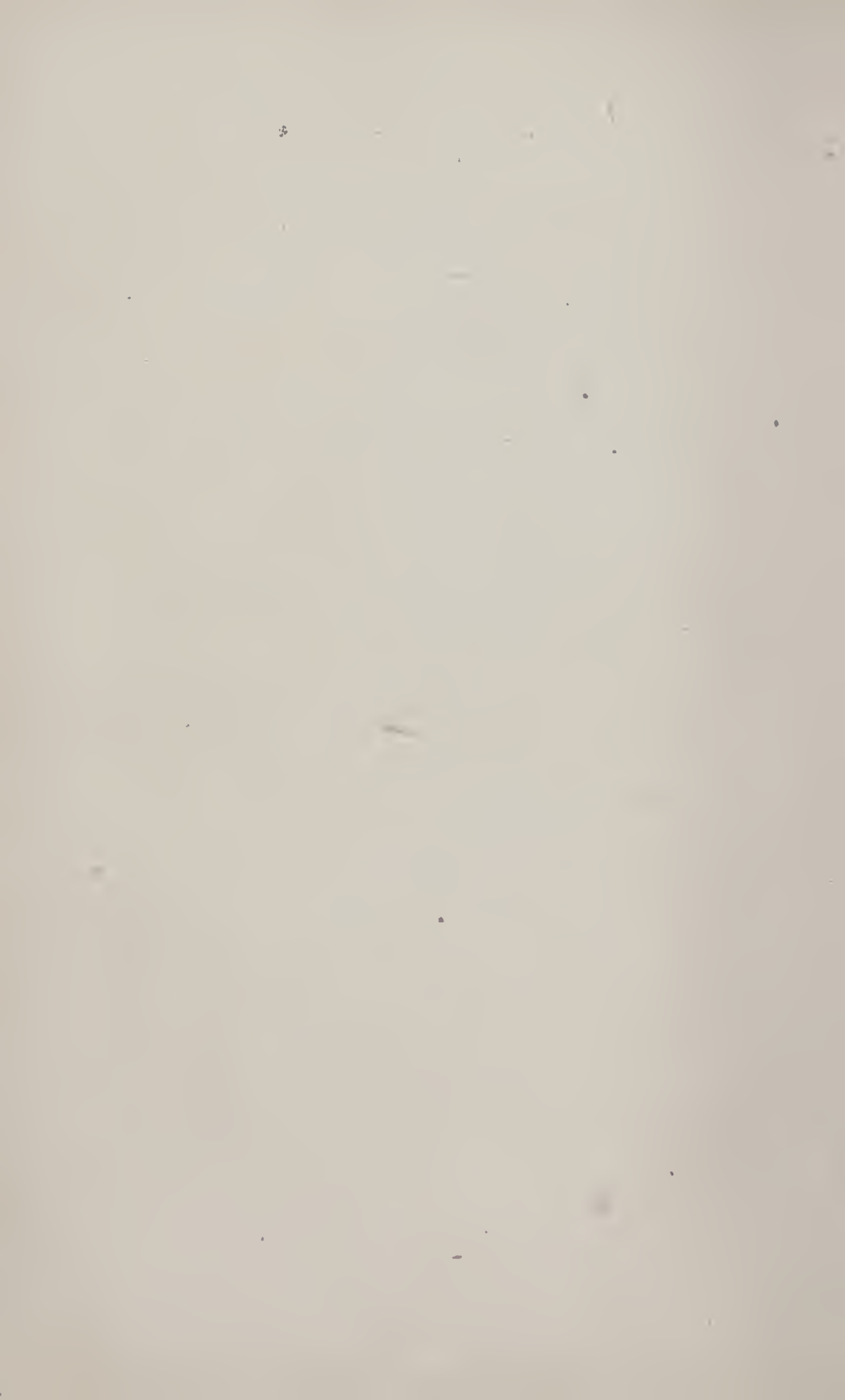


## P R E F A C E .

"Some two years ago," says the *New York Freeman's Journal* "we recollect, that, in explaining what kind of stories Catholics might read with safety, if not with profit, we instanced the Polish story of "*The Knout*," perceiving that its principles and sentiments were such as Catholic faith inspires. We have thought, therefore, that we could furnish our readers with no piece of light literature more entertaining and instructive than a good and spirited translation of "*The Knout*."

Whether the translation is "good and spirited" we cannot pretend to say, but it is now offered to the public precisely as it appeared in the columns of the *New York Freeman's Journal*, with the additional advantage of a careful revision by the translator.

*Montreal, April, 1856.*

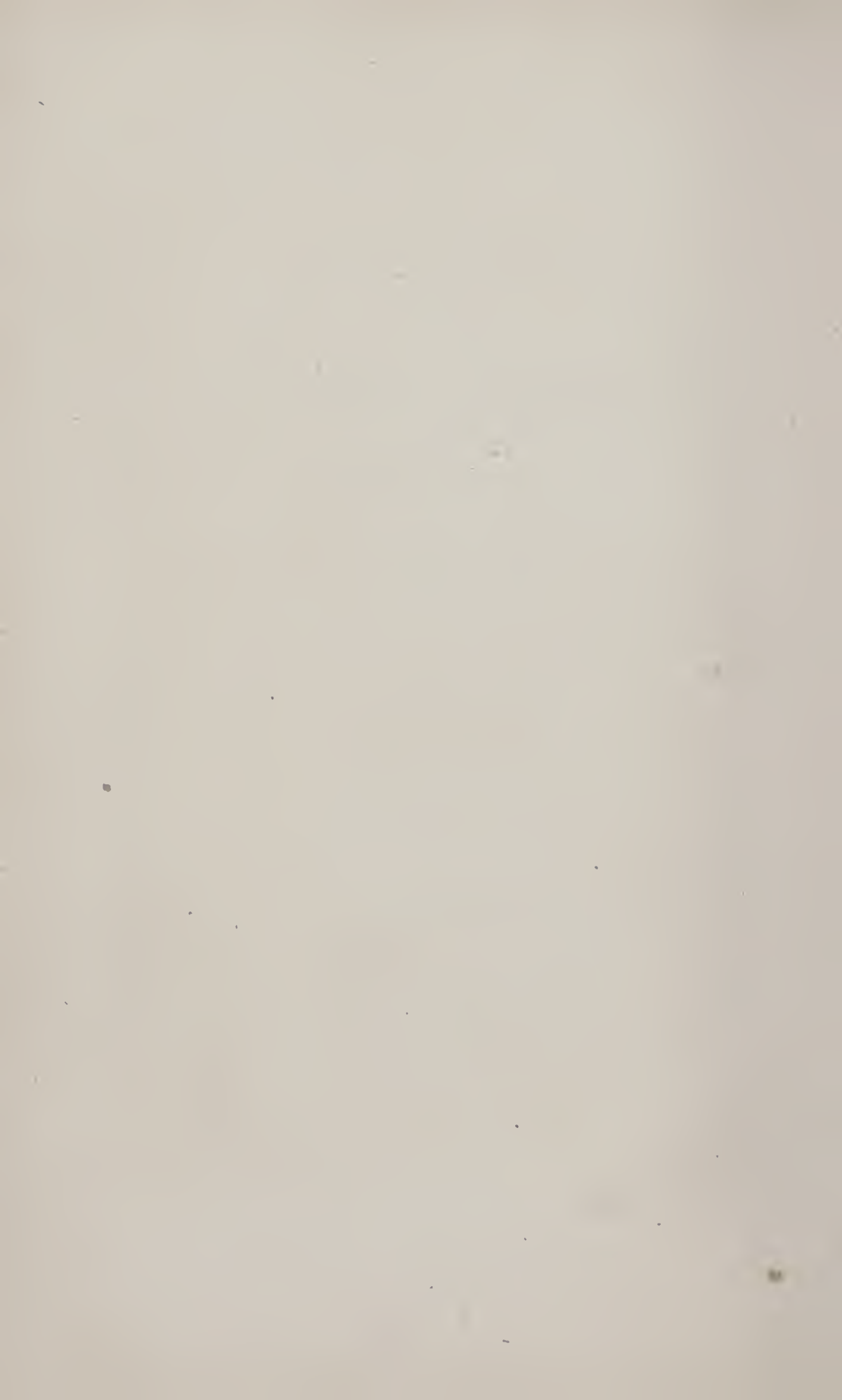




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# THE KNOT,

## A TALE OF POLAND.

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### CHAPTER I.

IN 1621, when the Polish ambassadors presented to Paul the Fifth the banners taken from the infidels, and piously besought him for relics, the venerable Pontiff replied: "Why ask ye me for relics?—you have but to pick up a little of your Polish earth, every particle of which is the relic of a martyr." In what words, then, might Christendom now address that long-suffering, and most heroic nation? In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Catholic Poland generously shed her blood at Chocim, and subsequently under the walls of Vienna, braving and repelling on those two memorable occasions, the attack of seven hundred thousand Turks. She fought for the common good of Europe, but encircled by a halo of glory, and cheered on by plaudits the loudest and most enthusiastic. Poor Poland! she was then formidable by her power, and illustrious by her achievements.

Who could then have foreseen that those very nations of Europe which owed their salvation to Poland, would one day form a coalition to despoil and subjugate their deliverer? And yet so it stands on the face of history. Artifice, perfidy, violence, were each in turn brought to bear on the unhallowed work, and Poland fell. In 1733, Russia, in concert with Austria, invaded Poland, entered Warsaw, deposed Stanislaus, the king, and proclaimed in his stead Augustus the Third. Thirty years later, Catherine the Second placed one of her creatures on the tottering throne of Poland, and the Russian ambassador might truly say to that phantom of Royalty: "You see I am your master, and you are to remember that your crown depends on your entire submission!" In 1768, the Confederation of Bar essayed, but vainly, to shake off the Russian yoke, and the kingdom was given up to the pitiless fury of a savage soldiery. At length came the dread torture of dismemberment—Prussia, Austria, and Russia tearing asunder their unhappy victim, and dividing amongst themselves her yet palpitating members. Poland, after all, was not dead—the breath of life was not yet extinguished, and she made an attempt to rise by the liberal constitution of the 3d May, 1791. A new struggle followed—the national cause was fettered by the weakness of the king, Stanislaus Augustus, and at its close saw the population of Poland reduced to *three* millions—

whereas, she had once numbered *twenty* within her fair provinces. But such a people can never remain quiescent under the lash of oppression—they rose again in 1794, when Kosciusko—the intrepid Kosciusko—achieved prodigies of valor in his mighty struggle with the allied powers; but in vain his prowess—he fell on the fatal field of Macieiowick, and soon after, twenty thousand victims, consisting of old men and young children, women and girls were brutally massacred in Praga, at the very gates of Warsaw. Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, the ex-favorite of Catherine, and the last king of Poland, abdicated, and that ill-fated kingdom was definitely divided between her three murderers, banished from amongst the nations, and deprived even of her distinctive name. Yet the drama ended not there. Fired by the victories of Napoleon, this nameless, this dis-severed nation again started into life, and followed with renewed hope the steps of the conqueror. Napoleon gave but a cool welcome to auxiliaries who sought but the restoration of their ancient independence, so that, instead of erecting Poland (as policy even, would have dictated) into a free state, whose gratitude would have made it an effective ally, he was led by his infatuated ambition into Russia, where destruction fell upon him. The great opportunity lost to Poland, she was for the fourth time divided amongst her greedy and ungrateful neighbors. The Emperor Alexander



behaved nobly to the provinces which fell to his share, and promulgated a constitution in strict accordance with the engagement entered into at the Congress of Vienna. But such generosity could not last on the part of Russia. Alexander was succeeded by Nicholas—the reaction of despotism speedily set in, and new chains were forged for unhappy Poland.

This brings us to the close of 1830, when the events occurred which we are about to relate. It is not easy to imagine the utter wretchedness of a country which had lain for sixty years under the iron yoke of the oppressor—torn and tortured by every species of cruelty and persecution. Terror overspread the land, for the Russian government was known to have its thousands of spies stationed throughout the provinces, in order to give information of even the faintest symptom of revolution. The broken-spirited Poles glided through their towns and cities more like shadows than living men—neither in the streets, on the public promenades, nor even in private assemblies, did any man dare to give utterance to a patriotic sentiment, though it were to his dearest friend. Members of the same family, when separated by distance, might no longer enjoy the pleasure of a mutual correspondence, for the seal was unhesitatingly broken by an infamous and unprincipled police. On the most trifling accusation a citizen would disappear, and not even an answer as to his fate could be obtained by his

afflicted family. The dungeons were filled with unhappy victims, and Siberia beheld with amazement her dreary deserts peopled with the fair sons of Poland.

Was it not, then, matter of surprise and admiration that Poland, bruised and broken as she was, even then contemplated the prospect of deliverance? Her heroic sons were wont to assemble in the impervious shades of her dense forests, and under cover of the night to concert measures for yet another attempt to liberate their suffering country, holding their own individual lives as naught, could that glorious end be attained by their sacrifice. This great question was agitated (secretly, of course,) from one end of the country to the other, and the time had arrived when each awaited the summons to arise and smite the oppressor.

Such was the state of affairs, when, on the morning of the 1st of December, 1830, a young Polish nobleman, named Raphael Ubinski, rode along by the shores of the Uiesnen, in the neighborhood of Grodno: a splendid hunting train by which he was preceded giving sufficient indication of the rank and fortune of its master. The hounds made the shore resound with their joyous baying, and the hunters, mounted each on a gallant courser, sounded at intervals their lively chorus, whereupon whole troops of boys and children, darting forth from the adjacent cottages, took their places in the rear of the *cortège*, eager to share in the sports of

the day. The fair face of nature, faded as it was by the icy touch of winter, wore at that moment when lit up by the rays of the wintry sun, such a charm as we see on the pallid countenance of a dying maiden when she smiles a melancholy smile. In front lay a spacious plain. On one side the river rolled on in peaceful majesty, its waves borrowing a rich purple tint from the rosy clouds of the early morning; while on the other, the dark line of the leafless forest was traced in broken and irregular undulations on the bright sky beyond. Yet neither the un hoped-for beauty of the day nor the noisy gaiety of huntsman or peasant, could brighten the serious and somewhat anxious face of the young nobleman, who rode at some distance behind his troop, as though to pursue his reflections undisturbed.

Raphael Ubinski, who had lost both his parents some years prior to the opening of my tale, was then about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age. He lived retired on his paternal estates with his maternal grandmother, a woman whose high moral courage and unbending principles of rectitude commanded Raphael's respect and admiration, as her judicious kindness won his warmest affection. Brought up as he had been in the ways of religion and virtue, he knew how to resist all the gaudy seductions of youth and prosperity. Study was the amusement of his leisure hours, and deeply struck with the impression that a son of Poland might



serve her by the powers of his mind as well as by his sword, he applied every faculty to make himself worthy of those high avocations to which he was by birth entitled. Yet Raphael was far from being ambitious, but seeing as he fully did the deplorable condition to which his country was reduced, he ardently desired to devote himself to her deliverance. There had been a time when, led away by the enthusiasm of youth, he had thought that force alone could remedy the misfortunes of Poland, and had thrown himself heart and soul into those secret societies which, eluding the vigilance of the Russian police, multiplied throughout the provinces. But, according as his reason and judgment were matured by study and reflection, he had become sensible that his unhappy country had no chance for success in a struggle with three great powers united against her to retain her in bondage: This saddening conviction had for some time damped the ardor of those hopes, which nothing could entirely destroy, founded, as they were, on those sacred and immutable rights for which he would willingly have laid down his life. "Alas, no!" would he sigh, in bitter sorrow, "God can never sanction deeds of violence and treason, yet Poland, poor exhausted land, cannot surely be doomed to groan in perpetual slavery. There *must* be some means of deliverance for her. Oh! that it were given me to know them!" After numberless reflections on this all-engrossing subject, he arrived at the conclusion that

Poland must needs have patience, and prepare herself by a high and pure morality for whatever contingencies might arise in her favour.— In the actual condition of the people, and the violent agitation of men's minds there were many signs whereby a reflecting and philosophic mind might dive into the future. These ideas, now settled into convictions, had effected an entire change in the mind and in the conduct of Raphael, so that, instead of fomenting the angry impatience of his fellow-patriots, and urging them on to that violent demonstration which he now saw would but make matters worse, he sought only to restrain their impetuosity, and to prove to them that they could best serve their country by applying themselves to foster and develop the national virtues. But this language, being new to them, was not often understood, while the reserve which Raphael was wont to assume when violent measures were under discussion, placed him in that false position, wherein a man appears, in the eyes of the impetuous and unthinking, to be undecided as to his course, simply because he aims only at what is practicable, and knows better than any other the means of attaining his end.

Such were the reflections of Raphael as he rode along by the river on the morning in question. He was on his way to join a great chase in the domains of the Count Bialewski, which chase was neither more nor less than a pretext for assembling the neighbouring noblemen, so

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that they might stimulate each other in the pursuit of freedom, and at the same time concert the needful measures for a struggle which could not now be distant. Raphael was more than a little embarrassed by the awkwardness of his position in regard to his friends, knowing that time alone could justify his opinions, and he shrank from assemblies like the present where he found it difficult to defend his convictions. But why, then, did he accept the invitation of the Count, a veteran soldier of exalted patriotism, whose whole soul was on fire with the desire of doing battle against the Russians? In the first place, having once entered with all sincerity into the views and hopes of his fellow-patriots, he knew not how to withdraw himself with any sort of grace from their councils; and in the next place, why Count Bialewski had a lovely daughter, and Raphael was but twenty-five. This daughter of the Count, fair as lover could desire, the co-heiress of a rich inheritance, and gifted with many rare qualities, both of mind and heart, was naturally an object of exceeding interest to all the young nobles in her vicinity. She was now in her twentieth year, but her father had been known to declare that he would not give her in marriage till she was twenty-one at least. In the meantime many suitors presented themselves, and amongst them Raphael stood eagerly forward. It was not for him, then, to refuse the Count's invitation, and still less could he do so, as he knew full well

that there would not be wanting some, who, in the hope of prejudicing Rosa against him, would represent his peculiar political opinions in the most unfavourable light, whereas he felt within his soul a certain energy of conviction which assured him that he could well justify himself when present.

Reflecting thus, alternately on the sad condition and cheerless prospects of his country, and the serious difficulties of his own individual position, he was journeying towards the castle, when he saw rapidly approaching, by a cross road, a gay and numerous hunting party. A moment after, he recognized in its chief, one of his friends, named Stanislaus Dewello, who, coming eagerly forward, greeted Raphael in the most cordial manner.

“I am so much the more gratified by this encounter, my dear Raphael,” he exclaimed with animation, “that I had little expected to meet you here.”

“And why so?”

“Why, because we scarcely ever see you now-a-days. You seem to shrink from the companionship of your former friends, and wrap yourself up in gloomy reserve, until we are brought to ask each other whether we can indeed count on you in the noble enterprise to which we are all devoted?”

“Before I take upon me to answer you, my dear Stanislaus,” said Raphael, lowering his voice “will you be kind enough to inform me



whether it is your indispensable custom to have that worthy steward of yours stationed as close behind as though he were your shadow?"

"Oh!" returned Stanislaus, "you need have no fears on that head; he is in all respects a most faithful fellow, and (between ourselves be it said) he has saved me from utter ruin, half a score of times at least. Nevertheless, I will send him away for the present, for if you will only hear me, I have something of importance to communicate. Firley, my good friend," turning to the steward, "we desire to be left alone just now, and let us have a little quiet, too, by all means—so you will tell our noisy hunters to keep their *fanfaras* for a more fitting moment. That's a good fellow—go now!"

The man scarcely attempted to repress a gesture of discontent, yet he gave the spur to his horse and rode away, an ironical smile curling on his lip.

"Are you sure of that man?" inquired Raphael, who had observed him closely.

"As sure as I am of myself!" promptly rejoined Stanislaus.

"It is well. And now, Stanislaus, can it be necessary for me to assure you again and again, that however much I may disapprove of your present plans, I am still entirely devoted to the same end at which you all aim?"

"I believe it, Raphael, I believe it; but, nevertheless, if it be permitted to each of us to have and entertain our own private opinions on

the subject, should we not all submit our judgment to that of the majority, that by our unanimity we may ensure success to the national cause?"

"Alas!" sighed Raphael, "I can never adopt your views, for I see all too clearly the dread abyss into which you are hurrying. On the contrary, I must ever protest against a course of action, the result of which will be still deeper misery for our common country. But if, notwithstanding my earnest remonstrances, you are still determined to drag that hapless country into a fruitless struggle, then I can only say that my duty will not permit me to absent myself from your ranks."

"So far, well, my friend. And now to speak plainly, as one friend to another. I would rather not see you at the castle to-day."

"What do you mean by that?" inquired Raphael, with surprise.

"Why, just this — that your eloquence may have its effect in cooling the zeal of our friends, at a time, too, when we require all the courage and all the energy we can bring to bear. Besides, you cannot hope to effect a change in our counsels, for we are in hourly expectation of hearing that which will draw our swords from their scabbards. Leave us then to act as occasion may require; nor seek to interfere with our arrangements through your influence with the Count, remembering always that though he ever seems to hear you with attention, he neither can nor will adopt your advice."

“Nevertheless, my good friend, you will allow that I know best what suits me, so you must e’en put up with my company as far as the castle.”

“Ay, marry, my master! You can do as you like, and I have only to confess myself a consummate dolt for having tried to turn you from a path which leads you to the bower of your lady-love. Now I am sure you cannot deny that neither politics nor patriotism forms the sole subject of your grave cogitations!”

“Nay, it were scarcely prudent in me to make a confident of one so prone to laughter. So, think as you may on that score, I am not to be persuaded from availing myself of the invitation with which the Count has honoured me?”

“Since that is the case, then,” cried Stanislaus, quickly, “I am bound to speak plainly and seriously, even at the risk of awakening your astonishment. You know me well enough to understand that I am pretty well skilled in the art of pleasing, and not less penetrating as to the success of such endeavours as have the favour of the fair for their end and aim. Now were you to ask me, on the strength of my superior judgment in such matters, what I think of your prospects with the Lady Rosa, (nay, hear me out, man — I have a right so to speak,) I should tell you candidly and fairly that you are but losing time, and had better go seek your fortune elsewhere. Heretofore it was quite allowable for you to pay your court to the lady

— ay, and win her, if you could — but now the case is widely altered. When a decided preference has been shown, we should at once give way to the successful candidate.”

“And that successful candidate —” demanded Raphael, with a faltering voice and a pale cheek.

“He stands before you, my dear Cato!”

On hearing this announcement, Raphael’s first thought was expressed by an incredulous and almost contemptuous smile. But when he looked upon the beaming face of his rival, a thousand anxious thoughts took possession of his mind, and gave him more uneasiness than he would have been willing to confess. However he might seek to repel the idea that the noble heart of Rosa could be caught by the merely superficial advantages of Stanislaus, he could not conceal from himself the fact that it would be difficult to find a more accomplished or more attractive cavalier. His figure was tall and commanding, yet perfectly elegant; and his handsome features were illumined with a sprightly and spirited expression which gave them no ordinary charm. Moreover, Stanislaus was lively and generous — was gifted with uncommon powers of persuasion, and had all the dauntless bravery of the knights of old. But on the other side, (for all things earthly have their shade,) his character had no solidity; he was prodigal, volatile, passionately fond of pleasure, and the sworn foe of anything like labour. And yet, as Raphael inwardly exclaimed, how light might



each of these faults appear in a young man who, like Stanislaus, could throw a charm even around his failings!

As for Raphael himself, he could bear no comparison to his brilliant rival. There was nothing in his appearance to attract attention, save only that unpretending and quiet grace which denotes the truly well-bred man. His countenance was rather interesting than handsome, and yet from the nobleness of its outline, and the intellectual expression of its every feature, it was just the face to rivet the attention of a superior mind. Yet, on a first glance (and such leaves generally the most durable impression,) it was impossible not to admire the singularly fine features of Stanislaus. There was, therefore, nothing improbable in the declaration Raphael had just heard; and so deep was his emotion, that it required all his self-control to preserve an appearance of composure. Still, he did not despair, being well acquainted with the extreme self-confidence which formed a distinctive mark in the character of his rival, and after a short silence, he replied:

"I am fain to believe, Stanislaus, that you would never have spoken so confidently did you not deem yourself fully authorized. Nevertheless, you must permit me to say that knowing as I do the extreme reserve usual to the Lady Rosa, together with that shrinking delicacy of feeling which belongs to her, I must still doubt whether you are as certain of her real sentiments as you seem to think."

“Why, Raphael, you must assuredly take me for a fool, to suspect me of making an idle boast where success was still doubtful?”

“Tell me, then, on what grounds do you build your hopes? for I dare affirm that you have received no formal consent from either Rosa or her father.”

“It is true, I have not; yet the thing must be beyond all doubt when our mutual friend and common rival, Leopold Majoski, said to me only yesterday, that he believed it sheer folly to compete with me, and that he felt himself constrained to waive his pretensions in my favour. May I die if I exaggerate in the least, as, on the contrary, I omit much of what he said, lest it might tire you to listen!”

“That may all be,” rejoined Raphael, dryly, “and yet I do not despair.”

“You do not despair! Why, see you not, my dear Raphael, that there exists between the Lady Rosa and myself the most perfect unison of taste and feeling? You cannot but remember, I am sure, that on winter evenings, when we assembled for music, she and I invariably sang together, nor the equally evident fact that when we meet in the ball-room I am ever her favorite partner. Have you not observed that when we walk together, my arm is sure to be eagerly accepted—not to say, sought? while in the chase, does she not always recognise your humble servant as the most skilful equerry that ever shielded lady fair from the perils of the

forest? Are you so blind as not to see the advantages to be derived from these occasions, so trifling in themselves—the numberless sweet words and interesting conversations which spring from this, our intimacy, strengthening and confirming my exclusive rights?”

“Were *these* the only means of pleasing the Lady Rosa,” returned Raphael, in a tone half serious, half ironical, “I must own it would be downright folly to compete with *you*, and it would only remain for me to follow Leopold’s example, and resign in your favor. But——”

“But the grave Raphael chooses to imagine that a young damsel may be caught by a philosophical or literary disquisition, or that she may be fascinated by the political speculations of a senator that is to be, or that she might be led to conceive an interest in a religious controversy. Considering himself a perfect master in each and all of these matters, he very probably fancies that they may overbalance the trifling counter-advantages of his rivals. Oh, sanctified simplicity! how richly you deserve a heavenly crown, since, alas! you are not likely to obtain your earthly reward!”

“Go on at your leisure, Stanislaus, for you know I am proof against both raillery and sarcasm. Yet I cannot refrain from reminding you that magnanimity becomes a victor.”

“But do you really dispute my claim to that title?”

“I dispute nothing. But when the Count decides against me, in his daughter’s name, then

I shall silently withdraw my claim. I may even add that defeat will lose something of its bitterness if you are to be the conqueror."

"Many thanks, my friend, and I cannot but admire your resignation even in perspective, though I much fear I could never imitate it in such a case. But this, I suppose, is one of the advantages of having what are called the Christian virtues. I have now only to say that being *warned*, you are already *half armed*. But here we are at the Castle, and without enmity I hope?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Raphael, aloud; but within himself he said—"Yes truly, if Rosa has been allured by the brilliant exterior of this young man—if she has yielded herself to the fascination of his manner and address, then have I but little cause for regret. If such be the case, I have been lamentably mistaken in my estimate of her character. A thousand others are as fair to look upon, and those perfections of mind and heart for which I loved her being thus found unreal, I can with comparative ease submit to her decision. Such a woman would be ill-suited to share the iron destiny which awaits me as a son of Poland. But why all this? am I sure that I have been deceived in Rosa?"

Raphael would doubtless have protracted his reflections still farther, had he not just then arrived at the gates of Count Bialewski's castle, which he entered with a full resolution to have his suspense ended either one way or the other.



## CHAPTER II.

VIEWED from the farther extremity of the plain on which it was situated, the castle formed an exceedingly fine perspective. Though made up of various styles of architecture, its outline was anything but discordant. In the centre rose a massive tower of three stories, crenelated and surmounted by a pointed spire, reminding the beholder of the pure and light architectural forms of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The tower was flanked by two wings of a much later erection, being evidently not older than the seventeenth century, but they were so contrived that their high casements, tall roofs, and tapering minarets, were in harmonious keeping with the more ancient pile in the centre. On the left, and rather behind the castle stood a charming chapel, which, with its pyramidal steeple, added yet another charm to the noble edifice. Around all ran a wide and deep moat, beyond which, on every side, stretched vast smiling meadows. The whole of this great mass of architecture stood forward in bold relief from an immense amphitheatre of dark woods, composed of trees whose giant proportions were the growth of centuries.

The Count came forth and received his guests

with a kind and friendly welcome. In person he was tall and robust, and might have counted some three score years, yet though his head wore the silver hue of age, there was about him no trace or token of declining strength, and his fine countenance had at once a noble and a martial look. Familiarly taking the arm of each of the two young men, he ascended with them the steps which led to the grand entrance, and conducted them to a parlor where, by the side of a large and cheerful fire, was seated the Countess Rosa, with the Vicar, and two gentlemen of the neighborhood, who were intimate friends of the family. The face of each individual of the group wore a grave and clouded aspect, and a glance at any of them sufficed to show that the real purpose of the present assemblage was far, far otherwise than it had been announced. Nevertheless, Stanislaus, with his characteristic assurance, approached Rosa, and very soon succeeded in drawing her into one of those gay and animated conversations which gave him the best opportunity to show off the peculiar graces of his mind. Raphael, on the contrary, having exchanged with Rosa a formal salutation, took his place directly opposite between the Count and the priest. Yet he could not refrain from casting many an anxious glance towards the young Countess, and his heart sank within him as he saw the frequent smile with which she greeted the lively sallies of Stanislaus, thus seeming to justify, as Ra-

phael thought, the boasting of his rival. From these most unwelcome reflections he was speedily aroused by the startling importance of the news which the count proceeded to communicate.

“My dear friend,” said the Count, addressing himself more particularly to Raphael, whose hand he affectionately took, “notwithstanding the difference of opinion which has within the last year or two sprung up between us, I am yet fain to regard you as one of the worthiest, and most devoted sons of Poland. Hence I am about to tell you what now engrosses our exclusive attention. Rendered desperate by the multiplied sufferings of this our native land, we have come to the final resolution of making yet another attempt to obtain her independence. From day to day we are looking out for the signal from Warsaw, awaiting which we are all here preparing to gird on the sword as an example for all Lithuania. You may say that this is nothing new, being neither more nor less than a farther step in our year-long projects. But now I solemnly assure you that the time for action is at length come, and we are on the eve of a great revolution.”

“Our distance from Warsaw, together with the extreme danger of committing such matters to paper, effectually prevents us from knowing the day appointed for the insurrection; but as soon as it has declared itself, and that there will be no danger of further procrastination, we shall be at once apprised, for my son Casimir, who is,

as you know, keeping garrison in Warsaw, has promised to brave every danger to open a communication between us and the centre of action. And now, Raphael, may I ask, without giving offence, what course do you propose taking amid the stirring scenes before us?

This question was followed by a profound silence, each one awaiting with lively interest the decision of the young noble. Even Stanislaus suspended his admirable discourse, and Rosa, pensive and thoughtful, seemed to listen with earnest attention.

"Yes, it would undoubtedly offend me," replied Raphael, with visible emotion, "were any one to doubt my willingness to sacrifice life, fortune and all for our beloved Poland! Yet, permit me to say, my lord, that I am responsible to my country alone for the course which I deem the best. Your views are excellent—that I will readily allow—but if, in your eagerness to see them accomplished, you are led to adopt means which, to me, appear more likely to draw down still deeper ruin on the land we all seek to serve, does it not become my sacred duty to oppose your designs, even though at the sacrifice of your friendship?"

"What! then," cried the Count, "can you be yet insensible to the weight of the yoke that crushes this unhappy land! Are you not yet tired of the burden?"

"I shall only be effectually tired of it," replied Raphael firmly, "when all the sons of



Poland, groaning beneath their intolerable load, shall arise in their might, even as one man, determined to die or to cast it off. My lord that day is not yet come—suffer me to say so, and pardon me if I seek to dispel the illusion which will assuredly terminate in your own destruction and that of your country. Think, I implore you, of what you are about to do! You are about to make a trial of strength with three formidable powers, who can easily bring against you an hundred bayonets to one. In such an extremity your sole chance of success is that the entire nation, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the noble, the artisan, and the serf may rise with one accord and take arms to free their country. Then, and not till then, can you expect success. Has your lordship any such hope? Have you ever had reason to believe that at your call the people will simultaneously come forth and strike for liberty and Poland? Unfortunately, we can not conceal from ourselves that the vast bulk of the common people keep doggedly aloof from us, because *our* cause and *theirs* are not yet identified. Even in those provinces where feudal serfdom has ceased to exist, the people see, ay! feel that they are despised by the nobles, and where that galling chain still binds them, have we not reason to fear that they regard us as their bitterest enemies? You will, therefore, be inevitably defeated—more excruciating torments will be inflicted on this already exhausted coun-

try, and worse than all, the prospect of her deliverance will be put off to an indefinite period. Ah! Count! there are, and must be, safer and surer means to attain our end, and would to God that I could impress my convictions on your mind."

The force and justice of these observations could not fail to produce an impression on an upright man and a disinterested patriot, such as Count Bialewski really was, and when he replied, it was in a grave and melancholy mood:

"Perhaps you are right, Ubinski; nor is this the first time, when, after our warmest discussions, I inclined to think so. Alas, yes! it is too true that our means are sadly disproportionate, as well to the great end we have in view, as to the difficulties which must be encountered. But, then, what can we do? Events are urging us forward — our brethren of Warsaw call on us to follow them, and follow them we must, were it to certain death."

"And wherefore should we despair of success?" cried Stanislaus, throwing a contemptuous glance on Raphael, "must men of birth and courage stoop to rely on the gratuitous assistance of their hereditary foes? — does not history furnish an hundred instances of a few brave men confronting with success a mighty army? You say that the people, if not against us, are but little likely to lend us their aid! — bah! what are *the people* to me—to us? Let the nobility only stand fast together (that same body

which, in our better days, sent forth more than an hundred thousand gentlemen to one battle-field,) and I promise you we shall make short work of the Russian hordes. At the present moment everything conspires to favour our enterprise, and such an opportunity may never again return for us. France, by her glorious THREE DAYS has given the signal of enfranchisement to the nations who groan in bondage. Belgium has followed her example. All the north of Europe is in motion, and despotism totters on its throne. One effort, then—one vigorous effort—seconded, as we doubtless shall be, by that gallant France whose bright example beckons us on to freedom, and, my life for it, Poland secures for ever her ancient independence!”

“Place no reliance on France, Stanislaus!” returned the Count, briskly. “She has never done anything for us. In the eighteenth century she stood coldly by, while Poland was cut up and divided like a slaughtered ox, her great philosophers at the feet of Catherine and of Frederick, applauding all the while the work of robbery and spoliation. The republic made fine speeches — very fine speeches indeed — on our behalf, and Napoleon kindly permitted our countrymen to fill the vacancies in his ranks, and now, yes now, that selfish, egotistical nation would make us the sacrifice for peace. Let us then rely on ourselves alone. It is, unhappily, too true that we are disunited, and that, when the day of peril comes, many of Poland’s brave

and warlike sons will keep sternly aloof from the struggle. But what then, Ubinski? — how else can we meet these mighty obstacles than by the desperate courage of despair?"

"Not so," answered Raphael. "Let us consecrate our energies to form a national coalition. Let us at once apply ourselves to prove to the people that we have only in view the prosperity and the independence of our country; let us convince them that we are disinterested enough to give up in their favour our own exclusive privileges, and that we shall henceforward regard them in very truth as our brethren, owing homage and subjection only to the laws, to virtue, and to God. Then should Providence afford us one of those favourable opportunities which it holds in reserve, oh! believe me, Count! that the Poles will be all ready, all resolved, all devoted to the cause of freedom!"

"I cannot but approve of a conception so high and noble, Ubinski; but how are we to realise it?"

Raphael was silent for a moment; he was still at that age when the mind, influenced by the imagination, conceives and pours forth her ideas, without pausing to render them applicable, or even possible. He was, however, about to reply, when another individual, older and far more experienced, and who had hitherto remained an attentive listener, manifested a wish to give his opinion. This was the vicar of the parish, Count Bialewski's most confidential



friend. He was a man of forty years, or thereabouts, most unassuming in his manners, and exhibiting on his placid features, at once the beaming hope of the true Christian, and the simple benevolence which marked his character.

“I should be unfaithful to my conscience and to the duty of my ministry, my dear Count,” he began, in a tone of calm decision, “were I to hesitate in placing before your consideration the infallible means of working out the glorious end at which you aim. Weak as ye are in point of numbers when compared with the power and the might of your oppressors, ye have further to deplore those unhappy dissensions which paralyze all your efforts, and ye begin to feel that it is absolutely necessary to unite the entire nation in the bonds of fraternal affection. So far this is well. But remember, that to induce the haughty noble to resign the privileges of his order, the rich to share their wealth with the poor, or the fastidious citizen to look without contempt on the unlettered artisan, there must be some fundamental principle common to all, superior to all opinions and to all systems — a principle which, while it imposes certain duties on all, holds out to each an unfailing security. You will readily admit that such can never be the result of any political system, or of any set of philosophical notions. All that originates with man is tinged with error, and subject to contradiction. Let us, then, go higher in our search for this governing principle, and we must

acknowledge that the divine laws alone can wield universal dominion. They alone, in the name of an interest superior to all earthly concerns, will teach you to love, to aid, and to raise to your own level those whom you have so long trampled upon as vassals and slaves, and to make of them friends and brothers, that ye may all arrive together at the goal of national freedom.—After all the progress of modern enlightenment, and in despite of all charters, there will be still amongst ye rich and poor, high and low, strong and feeble, and consequently the leaven of discord and of hatred, which religion only can extinguish by the inexhaustible streams of divine charity. Great nations have ever been religious! Go, therefore, and seek from that celestial source that strength of which ye stand in need, that ye may indeed become a free people! Ah, my lord! it is not without reason that I thus address you. Where now shall we look for the fervent faith, and for the lofty virtues of ancient Poland? Even in our own days—within the last twenty years—have ye not outraged the divine morality of the gospel, in that pure and admirable precept on which is founded the union and the love of the domestic circle? ‘Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder!’ These are the words of Christ, and yet ye have basely accepted the law of divorce, a law which outrages nature, and nature’s God. Yes! and even when the conscientious cry of the people besought you to repeal that odious

enactment, ye disdainfully refused, and your legislators were obstinate in maintaining that legal proof of your degradation and corruption. Alas, alas! it is not by bidding defiance to the mandates of God, that a nation can obtain his assistance, and we should never forget that he has punishment reserved for public, as well as individual crimes."

This lively effusion of apostolic zeal made no slight impression on the hearers, who were, for the most part, religious men—at least of religious principles (as the Poles generally are) and well acquainted, moreover, with the saintly piety of the speaker. Stanislaus alone suffered a satirical smile to wreath his lip, which was, however, promptly repressed by a reproving look from Rosa.

"May God pardon us our faults, or rather our crimes?" ejaculated the Count solemnly, "and may we be permitted to cancel them by our blood. That is the only amends we can now make, for it is too late to follow your wise admonitions. A fixed resolution has been taken, perhaps rashly, (the future will tell)—by many thousands of our countrymen in every corner of the kingdom. It is not for us to fail them in their need, and we have only to conquer or die."

"So be it!" responded a young man who entered the parlor at that moment by a private door, used only by members of the family.

At the sound of his voice each one started up, and turned towards him in surprise, not

knowing what was to be expected from this sudden interruption.

"It is Casimir—my brother!" cried Rosa joyfully, as she ran towards the stranger.

"What! can it be my son?" exclaimed the Count, as he received the young man in his arms, and returned his warm embrace.

"Oh heavens! he is wounded!" cried Rosa, pale and trembling, as she perceived spots of blood on her brother's garments. "Sit down, Casimir, and rest your wearied limbs. I myself will wash your wound while they go in quest of the doctor."

"It is nothing, Rosa—nothing, father, I assure you, so pray do not trouble yourselves about a mere scratch. But the cause of it is glorious, and concerns you all. Poland is free! Two days since the insurrection broke out in Warsaw: the Russians have evacuated the city, and I have penetrated the enemy's line to bring you these joyous tidings, which must necessarily be the signal for a general rising throughout all the provinces of the kingdom."

On hearing this announcement, a cry of joy was caught from mouth to mouth, and all gathered eagerly around the young Bialewski, each endeavoring to obtain an answer for his own inquiry, and all questioning and cross-questioning without order or consideration.

"My good friends," said Casimir, "before I proceed to satisfy your very natural and very laudable curiosity, I think it better to tell you



that having been pursued by a detachment of cavalry from whom I very narrowly escaped, by taking to the woods, I have some precautions to take so as to prevent a recognition. I must, therefore, beg leave to retire in order to make the necessary alterations on my outward man, and also to seek some repose, which you will acknowledge that I stand in need of, when you consider that for two days I have been scampering through woods and ravines like a frightened hare. Good bye for a while."

Rosa took her brother's arm with tender affection, and they withdrew together.

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### CHAPTER III.

"Well, said the Count, addressing his friends, "I hope you are now convinced that my foresight was not at fault. The truth is, that notwithstanding our weakness, we have no other rule than that of despair. Nothing could be worse than the grievous yoke by which we are now weighed down, and even though we fail in our attempt to shake it off, we have the prospect of escaping it by a glorious death. For the rest, we have now only to concert the most prompt and vigorous measures — all other and more abstract discourse would be both profitless and unseasonable."

“Oh! as to me,” cried Stanislaus, joyously rubbing his hands together, “I care just as much for the eloquence of Cicero or Demosthenes as I do for the ukases of his Imperial Majesty. No! the only sound I wish to hear is the roar of musketry and cannon, and all I ask is to find myself sword in hand before our mighty lords, the Russians, though they numbered twenty to our one!”

“There is every probability that your patriotic wish will be speedily realised,” returned the Count, warmly shaking the young man’s hand, “and I think I may safely say that each of our friends here present will stand by your side on that trying day with all the force he can command.”

As the Count spoke, he fixed his eyes on Raphael, as though the remark were meant to elicit his final answer, and Ubinski, without a minute’s hesitation, replied in a tone at once firm and mournful:

“For the last time, Count, let me warn you that the liberation of Poland can never be accomplished by a mere effort of despair, be it ever so energetic, but it must be the result of a long, and ceaseless, and devoted application. Since I have unfortunately failed to impress your mind with my convictions, I must only treasure them in silence, for they may one day become available to us should we survive the coming time. And now my life and fortune are at my country’s service.”

“Oh, friends! my worthy friends!” cried the Count, raising to Heaven his eyes now filled with tears, and radiant with the fire of patriotism, “so much courage and self-devotion will not, I firmly hope, go without their reward. Souls so noble are not made for slavery. Ah! the old are wont to sigh for the past, and to attribute the dreadful calamities which have fallen upon us, to the degeneracy of the rising generation. But for my part, I am proud and happy to bear witness that you are right worthy of your noble fathers, and your presence, your words, and your example, have power to dissolve the ice from the soul of age, and restore it to its pristine vigor. As a soldier of Kosciusko and of Napoleon, I have shared in many a brilliant victory, but never have I faced the foe with a firmer confidence than I shall as your leader, my young and gallant friends!”

Casimir and Rosa just then entered the room, and though the Count glanced with legitimate pride over the noble face and form of his son, yet his gaze rested with melancholy fondness, on the mild features of his daughter. Should he fall in the approaching struggle, who would, or could, protect that dear girl. With the rapidity of lightning that thought impressed itself on his mind, saddening the enthusiastic devotion of the patriot by the keen sense of sacrifice and of separation.

“Who would be worthy to receive such a trust?” he repeated to himself in anguish, and

he looked alternately at Stanislaus and Raphael. Whatever might have been his reflections, he could not long pursue them amid the noisy gratulations which followed the appearance of Casimir. The latter was completely metamorphosed: having divested himself of all that might indicate his profession as an officer in the Russo-Polish army, he appeared now in the costume of a civilian, so that with his *mustachios* closely shaven, and his hair cut short around his fresh and smiling countenance, he might well have passed for an inoffensive student.

"I crave your pardon, friends all," said Casimir to his father's guests, who were well known to him, "for having left you so abruptly, but, truth to tell, I was sinking with fatigue, and had, moreover, no ambition to die like the Greek soldier while announcing my glad tidings. If the Russians had caught me as I then was, the chapter would be instantly ended for me, whereas we are just now at the opening of a great drama in which I have a part to act before I die."

"I trust you will be safe here, my son," said the Count, with some anxiety in his tone; "nevertheless, until such times as we have hoisted the national flag, (which we shall soon do,) you must pass for a stranger here; in fact, it would be unsafe to be recognised, seeing that we are surrounded by spies. Oh! is it not joy to think that we shall soon breathe more freely?"



How happy must you all be in your free Warsaw, my dear Casimir?"

"Casimir does not choose to tell you, father," interposed Rosa, "that he has eaten nothing to-day yet but a few wild roots picked up in the woods, I must, therefore, insist that you will lay your commands on him to leave off talking until he has partaken of the supper which has already been announced."

"Let us then adjourn to the supper table, gentlemen," said the Count, rising, "around which we may discourse just as freely, for my faithful Valentine and his son will be the only attendants."

The company at once proceeded to an immense hall, decorated with full length portraits of the Count's ancestors, intermingled with ancient pieces of armour arranged in panoply. The Vicar having pronounced a blessing, they each drew closer around the magnificently spread table. The meal itself was quietly dispatched, for all were anxious to hear the details of the late event, and supper once over the Count was the first to break silence.

"This is, perhaps, the last time that we shall meet in peaceful guise under my ancient roof-tree, and I would, my friends, that you may hold in pleasurable remembrance the exquisite enjoyment of these tranquil moments, when in peace and security we listen to the inspiring recital of what our brethren have accomplished for our suffering land. May we soon follow

them to the arena, that together we may wrest from the grasp of our oppressors that divine liberty, without which man is deprived of his rightful dignity. Relate to us then, my son, those heroic deeds which you yourself have witnessed, and may the recital, like the songs of Tyrteus, inspire us to combat and subdue."

"You all know," began Casimir, "the cruel perplexities under which we have laboured for the last six months, that is to say, since the unexpected revolution of July, in France. If, on the one side, the public enthusiasm had increased, the Russian police on the other had fearfully increased its severity. Hence it was that the chiefs of the national party incessantly watched, constantly menaced, and often surprised, knew not how to communicate with each other, or to arrange with any degree of certainty, the execution of their projects. Nevertheless, after displaying the most unprecedented address, constancy and devotion, they succeeded in determining the mode of attack, and making out for each of their adherents the part he was to play. Finally, they appointed the evening of the 29th November for the accomplishment of their hazardous enterprise. The burning of two old buildings, one in the south, near Belvidere, (the residence of the Grand Duke Constantine,) the other in the west, was the preconcerted signal of attack on every point of the city where the Russians were stationed. The Polish regiments then in Warsaw, officers and

men, were almost to a man engaged in the conspiracy. Unfortunately the signal-fires, which were to have roused all the people at once, were almost a total failure, which necessarily retarded our success, as waiting for those fires the people were at first misled. However, one of those intrepid citizens, who have for many a year daily staked their lives in the national cause, Peter Wysocki, resolutely presented himself at the ensign's quarters, crying out—“*Poles, the hour of retribution is come! Now is the time to conquer or die—to arms!*” Whereupon, all the students, to the number of one hundred and sixty, put themselves in motion and rapidly followed Wysocki to the Russian cavalry barracks, not far from there, at the gates of the city. A fierce engagement ensued, when the Russians, deceived by the darkness into the belief that they were attacked by a strong force, gave way, and sounded the retreat. About the same time another band, consisting of some students from the University, had a task to fulfil not less perilous or important, being nothing less than to surprise the Grand Duke in his palace, and make him a prisoner.

This handful of brave men divided into two parties, of which one entered by the gardens into the palace, while the other gained admission through the principal entrance, crying out “Death to the tyrant!” The Grand Duke was then sleeping, but was instantly aroused by a *valet-de-chamber*, and carried off by a private

passage to the apartments of the Grand Duchess. This it was that saved his life, for the students having vainly sought him elsewhere had the noble delicacy to respect the privacy of the apartments of the princess. In the meantime the prefect of police, Lubowidski, and the Russian General, Gendre, the Grand Duke's favorite, were both sacrificed to vengeance. This tumult speedily attracted the Russian troops from Belvedere, and our friends had barely time to retire by the little wood of Lazienki. They then rejoined Wysocki, whose position had become critical in the extreme. The Russian cavalry having at length discovered the real number of the assailants, had determined to cut them to pieces, but fortunately the diversion made by the conspirators at the Belvedere had enabled this whole band to draw itself off with little loss, and to seek in the interior of the city those reinforcements which they had reason to believe awaited them. During the first attack the Polish troops of the garrison had left their respective barracks, and took various positions to keep watch on the movements of the Russian infantry. At the same time the people were drawn forth in crowds by the protracted discharge of musketry, and led on by some young patriots, and a few officers, proceeded to the arsenal, chanting the hymn, "Poland! thou art not without defenders!" The struggle at that point was somewhat prolonged, but at length the Russians



were forced to retire and the arsenal fell into the hands of the people.

This new victory redoubled the popular enthusiasm; the Belvedere was speedily taken, and the Grand Duke Constantine, followed by his guard in disorder, abandoned the palace, and was fain to take refuge in a cottage beyond the gates of Warsaw. Having thus made ourselves masters of the principal strongholds of the city, from that night our triumph was certain. On the following day, it is true, the conflict was renewed, but the Russians were everywhere repulsed—and before sunset, the citizens of Warsaw were free. But how can I give you an adequate idea of the joy, the acclamations, the transports which followed? It seemed as though the entire city made but one great family: people accosted each other in the streets, conversed, and even embraced, without the slightest previous acquaintance. Open house was everywhere kept; rich and poor, officers, soldiers, and workmen seated themselves at the same table, broke bread together, and touched their glasses as they drank to Liberty and Poland. In the midst of these clamorous festivities the chiefs assembled in council to concert what was next to be done, for the Russians were still at our gates busied in re-forming their scattered battalions. In the course of the day General Blopick appeared amongst us, and accepted the command of the army. Without a moment's delay the work of organization commenced; the Polish

troops ranged themselves under the national banner, and several corps of volunteers were formed. Provisions, clothes, ammunition, and money poured in on all sides, and the women of all ranks came eagerly forward to place their jewels and other ornaments in the public coffers. Public enthusiasm knew no bounds, and patriotic devotion was at its height; how, then, could we augur aught save freedom and prosperity for Poland?"

"I am astonished, my dear Casimir," exclaimed Stanislaus, "that you were able to tear yourself from such a festival as that."

"Why, truly, in the midst of such thrilling excitement, and in presence of a Russian army with whom we burn to engage, I might doubtless have forgotten myself; but in the very first council of war that was held, it was judged absolutely necessary to propagate the insurrection as widely and as speedily as possible. It was found indispensable that a very serious diversion should be made, so as to leave us time and opportunity to organise our forces, and to offer an energetic resistance to an enemy who could, in a few days, have command of the most ample resources. It was determined to send emissaries without delay into all the Polish provinces, in order to raise the country in all directions, and thus menace the retreat of the Russians. You were too well known, my dear father, not to be instantly thought of, and I was at once despatched into Lithuania with a com-

mission for you, investing you with the command of all the volunteer corps that may be formed in these parts."

"It is admirably well," exclaimed the Count, "for to-morrow all our friends are to assemble in a retired spot, under pretext of a grand chase, and I trust we shall only separate to take up arms at once."

"And how will you dispose of me, father?" demanded Rosa with a smile that denoted the tranquil firmness of her mind. "I am really at a loss to know what post you design for me in your staff."

"My dear child," replied the Count, with an involuntary sigh, "I fear we must separate for a while, and I propose to leave you in Warsaw with your aunt, where you can pray for us in safety."

"Oh! but not so far from you, dear father! With your permission I will remain with the rear-guard of your army in order to watch over the wounded. Anything less would ill become the daughter of an old soldier, and still less a Christian."

"Since even our women display such heroic courage," said the Count, as he tenderly embraced his daughter, "what may we not expect?"

"Oh! as to that, my dear Count," said the priest, "there are many women whose example it would be well for men to follow."

"I perfectly agree with you, father," exclaimed Stanislaus throwing an impassioned glance on

Rosa, "and really that sentiment could not be better expressed."

Raphael bowed a silent assent.

"Well, we shall certainly fight all the better," observed the Count, "when we know and feel that the safety of those we love so well is depending on our success. But, hark! what tumult is this in the castle? Go, Valentine, and see what it is."

Just as the old man was leaving the room, a Russian officer appeared on the threshold, and behind him some glittering bayonets. He entered the hall, bringing Valentine back by the shoulder, and addressed the Count, who had stood up to ask the cause of this threatening apparition.

"I am to suppose that I address Count Bialewski," said the officer, stiffly, though politely. "We have been informed, on good authority, that your lordship's son, Captain Bialewski, lately in the service of His Imperial Majesty, has traitorously deserted his colors, and taken refuge in Lithuania, with the most criminal intentions, which it is our duty to frustrate. Consequently, my lord, I have received orders to search this castle, as the captain may be reasonably supposed to be somewhere in or about it."

"What!" cried the Count, "you tell me my son has deserted?—for what purpose, I should like to know?—Surely, there must be some strange mistake."



“I have no explanations to offer, my lord, but I have orders to execute, and at once, too, as circumstances do not permit delay.”

“What circumstance do you mean?” persisted the Count, anxious to learn something from the rigid officer. “Is there anything new going forward?”

“I have something else to do than retailing news,” muttered the officer, in an impatient tone, and with an embarrassed air. And then, with a sheet of paper in his hand, he set about making his investigation. Confronting in turn each of the guests, he compared them with the written description which had been sent to him, and finding that none present tallied exactly with the portrait, he withdrew to extend his search through the castle, announcing that if unsuccessful he would leave a garrison in the house for some days. This occurrence, so entirely unforeseen, had stupified all present, and though the Count and his son had preserved an admirable composure while the officer was present, he was no sooner gone than they acknowledged themselves confounded by the suddenness of this fearful blow. Rosa then threw herself, pale and trembling, into the arms of her father.

“Save him!” she cried, “oh, save him! They will return—I know they will, and Casimir will be lost. Now is the moment to take up arms; now is the time to expel the enemy. I am but a woman—a weak, trembling woman, but I am sure I can wield a weapon in defence of my

brother, and my father's house. Hitherto I have offered up prayers only for my country; now I can willingly sacrifice my life in her cause. My father, my friends, and you, young lords; let us do something to save my brother!" With all her assumed courage, the tears streamed from her eyes as she spoke, and the sight of her grief touched every heart. In a moment she was surrounded by a sympathising group, all vying with each other in their assurances of entire devotion to her wishes.

"Be not afraid, my child!" said the Count soothingly, "your brother is and will be safe, for even in the event of his being discovered, we are strong enough to defend him!"

"If you will only permit me, Count," cried Stanislaus eagerly, "I will undertake, with the aid of these noblemen and our united followers, to disarm this detachment, and then we shall again be our own masters!"

"Oh, no," said the Count, in a decided manner, "we must absolutely put off the attack till to-morrow. You have here yet another proof that God watches over us.—To-morrow the entire population of the district will assemble around the castle, and a thousand arms will rise in obedience to a word or a sign. The pretended chase will lull to sleep the vigilance of the foe, and we shall have them in our power before they even suspect our design. And for you, my daughter, my dear daughter, summon all your courage, and be assured that our first

moment of freedom shall see you conveyed hence to a place of security. As notwithstanding all your fortitude, I well know that you could never bear to look for any length of time upon the piteous spectacle this place will soon present."

"My dear father," exclaimed Rosa, earnestly, "I should blush to see you trouble yourself at such a time on my account. Surely you cannot but see that it is not for myself I tremble. You have brought me up as a soldier's daughter should be, and you are already aware how little I am influenced by those imaginary terrors which usually enervate the minds of young girls. I trust I shall soon learn to restrain the expression of that uneasiness and alarm which I must nevertheless ever feel where the safety of those I love is at stake. But I entreat you, do not send me away, for it is then that in the dread uncertainty of absence I should be truly miserable. You are about to rush into a thousand dangers; suffer me then to be near you that I may endeavor to console you in sorrow and in disappointment, and aid you should that be required. Besides, all woman as I am, I have imbibed so much of your patriotism that it will afford me inexpressible pleasure even to wait upon my country's defenders."

As she spoke, the sweet, clear tones of her voice, the sparkling beauty of her eyes, and her supplicatory attitude, were altogether irresistible.

“My dearest child,” exclaimed the Count, “we are but too happy to have you with us—may Heaven prolong that happiness. You will now retire, Rosa, it is already late, and at dawn to-morrow you must be on horseback, for you have an important part to play in our chase, seeing that you must lead on the main body of the hunters, whilst we go aside to consult on what we are to do. Go, then, and remember us and our great enterprise when you kneel before our God in prayer!”



#### CHAPTER IV.

HAVING tenderly embraced his daughter, the Count looked after her as she left the room, with a melancholy and abstracted air. But speedily recovering himself he turned calmly towards his friends:

“It is time for us to separate,” said he, “and you may all yield without apprehension to the soothing influence of sleep. I am now going to give my orders to Valentine, and will have it so arranged that this Russian troop shall be closely watched, and on the least manifestation of danger from them, they shall instantly be put to the sword, as they do not, I believe, number more than forty. To-morrow will be our grand day, and I hope the last rays



of its sun will gild our national banner as it proudly floats from the summit of the great tower." Then turning to the Priest, he went on: "You will, I am sure, father, offer up the holy sacrifice for us before dawn, in the chapel. Till then, may God protect us all!"

The party then separated, each being desirous of obtaining some repose ere the fatigues and dangers of the morrow set in. Raphael alone remained behind, requesting the Count to favor him with a few moment's conversation.

"Most willingly my dear friend," replied the Count, walking back with him towards the fireplace. "Speak now—I listen."

"Now that we are on the eve of great events which concern us all alike," said Raphael, in a voice which he vainly sought to render steady, "will your lordship permit me to open my mind to you? I have long aspired to the hand of your daughter, though fully sensible of my own unworthiness of such an honor. Encouraged, nevertheless, by your lordship's unvarying kindness and attention, I now venture to ask whether you will or can favor my suit, and permit me to speak more freely to the Lady Rosa than I have yet dared to do?"

"My dear Ubinski," exclaimed the Count, pressing his hand with paternal affection, "I will not hesitate to tell you that your proposal gives me very great satisfaction, and be assured that if it be unsuccessful the fault rests not with me. Yes! I most sincerely wish that my

daughter may view the matter as I do, for I should assuredly welcome the day that would give you to me for a son."

"My dear lord!" said Raphael, with unfeigned delight, "how can I ever prove to you how deeply grateful I am for your unmerited partiality?"

"I am just going to tell you that, Raphael," rejoined the Count quickly. "In anticipation of those misfortunes which will inevitably attend us in the prosecution of our designs, I have already offered up myself and all that I possess to the uncertainty of a stormy future. This I have judged it my duty to do as a soldier and a Christian, yet am I still haunted by one sad thought, which, at times, almost unmans me. Indifferent as I am to my own fate, I am full of anxiety for that of my daughter, since, if I am destined to fall, what will become of her?—who will watch over and protect her?—will devote himself to her happiness?—who, in fine, will love her like her old father?—nobler yet by her mind than by her birth, lovelier a thousand times by her virtues than by the charms of her person? Who can set a proper value on my priceless child? Such are the questions I have often asked myself; and, Ubinski, notwithstanding the difference between our political opinions, I have found but you in all the range of my acquaintance, with a heart sufficiently pure and a mind sufficiently elevated, to ensure the happiness of my daughter! You

may then judge how great is my joy when you propose yourself for her acceptance."

"Ah!" exclaimed Raphael, fervently, "if I have no other merit whereon to found my claim, I have at least that of a profound sense of Rosa's inestimable worth, and if I only succeed in winning her affection, I can promise, in all sincerity, that my whole future life shall be devoted, after God, to her happiness. But the main point is, my dear Count, can I have any reasonable hope that she will receive me as a suitor?"

Here Raphael stopped short—his conversation with Stanislaus suddenly recurred to him, and not even the paternal friendship of the Count was able to dispel his fears.

"To morrow, my dear Ubinski," said the Count after a pause, "To morrow you shall have a decided answer, for after all, the decision rests with my daughter. In the meantime, you know, you can count on my good offices."

Raphael then retired, and he was scarcely gone when Casimir entered, and approached his father with a somewhat mysterious air. "I am charged," said he, "with an embassy which, under our present circumstances, may appear strange, yet as I have promised to lose no time, I must go through with it at once: in a word, father, (for this is no time for idle discourse,) my friend Stanislaus, seeks, through me, your permission to address my sister."

"Indeed?" exclaimed the Count, more than

a little embarrassed by this second application.

"It is even so, father! and I need not, I am sure remind you that this proposal is not to be lightly treated, since Stanislaus is unexceptionable as to family and fortune, and possesses, besides, many brilliant qualifications."

"Undoubtedly," replied the Count, "but you can conceive my perplexity when I tell you that Raphael has just this moment preferred a similar petition."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Casimir, surprised as his father had before been.

"We have then to make a choice, and the necessity is truly a painful one to me. However, it is not for us to decide—the matter rests, of course, with your sister." In the meantime, tell me frankly what is your opinion; laying aside all prepossession for either one or the other, and speaking conscientiously, which of these young noblemen would be best calculated, think you, to ensure the happiness of our dear Rosa?"

"As you have put the question so directly, my dear father, I must candidly acknowledge that notwithstanding the numerous advantages enjoyed by Stanislaus, I have more faith in the nobler and more stable character of Raphael."

"Ha! now I see that you do indeed desire your sister's happiness," said the Count as he embraced his son, "and your opinion is precisely mine."



“And yet, father, when Stanislaus constituted me his envoy, and while giving me my instructions, he gave me to understand, by all sorts of round-about ways, that he has some reason to believe himself tolerably sure, as far as my sister is concerned, so that it is only your consent he believes wanting to make all right.”

“Ha! the case begins to wear a graver aspect,” said the Count, in a pensive tone. “However, we shall see how it is. I shall go and talk with Rosa on the subject, and I know she will not deceive me. As to yourself, Casimir, you will await me in my sleeping apartment, where there is a bed prepared for you for to-night. Valentine and his son will keep guard on the door, and as all our people are warned to be on the alert, we can have them around us on the slightest appearance of danger.—These precautions were all necessary, I can assure you; for treachery is around us under one form or another.—Go, then, and await my coming, but be prudent and watchful, I conjure you, for we know these Russians too well to doubt that there is a price, ay! and a golden one, fixed on your head.”

Count Bialewski traversed with a slow step the corridor which led to the apartments of his daughter, reflecting, as he went, on the two proposals he had so lately received, and asked himself what objection could he seriously propose in the event of Rosa’s declaring in favor of Stanislaus. He had long since remarked the

particular attentions of these two young men and had made the character of each his peculiar study. This investigation was anything but favorable to Stanislaus, who, with all his striking advantages of face, and form, and manner, appeared to the Count to have a certain flexibility of mind and lightness of principle which might seriously compromise the happiness of his daughter. In Raphael, on the contrary, he had early discovered a high and noble mind, together with the most unbending sense of rectitude as displayed in all his actions. Raphael's whole soul seemed wrapped up in the loveliness of virtue, and likely to make any sacrifice rather than tarnish that bright ideal. But yet, if Rosa was no longer free to choose, what was to be done? Must he suppress the yearning tenderness of his heart, and exact from her a rigid submission to the calculating views of age? And, moreover, Stanislaus, with all his failings, was not without numerous virtues, and was there not every reason to hope that even those faults and foibles would disappear in time before the bright example of Rosa? It might well be, and yet the Count could not think, without a sigh, on even the probability of such a union.

Full of doubt and anxiety he knocked at Rosa's door and was instantly admitted. She had not yet gone to bed, and was kneeling before a crucifix, engaged in her evening devotions. The Count made a sign that she should

not disturb herself, and taking his place in front of the fire-place, he continued to reflect on what he should say to Rosa. Let us then profit by this opportunity, in order to survey the apartment, which was of ordinary dimensions, and might be considered as Rosa's boudoir or work-room. Everything around bore testimony to the taste and refinement of the presiding genius. The compartments of the carved oak wainscoting were adorned with drawing and painting, in which were easily discernible the peculiar genius of Rosa. A piano stood open at the further end of the room, and on it lay some of the best compositions of Beethoven and Rossini. A large glass case set in between the two windows contained the library, consisting for the most part of the great French literature of the seventeenth century, together with a crowd of names ending in *ski*, and well known beyond the Vistula. On either side of the fire-place was ranged flower-vases containing plants of various kinds in full-blossom, which, at that inclement season, spoke volumes for the attentive care bestowed upon them. It was a scene wherein the elegance and luxury of a lordly dwelling were mingled with the simplicity which Rosa best loved, and perhaps the greatest charm of the apartment was the perfect neatness and good order everywhere visible.—It was there that Rosa, as mistress of the mansion, was wont to receive her lady visitors. And now, in order to complete the picture, we have but to glance at Rosa

herself. She was, as we have elsewhere said, somewhere about twenty ; her figure was tall and slender in its proportions ; her features regular and well-formed, but chiefly remarkable for the serene and noble expression by which they were animated. Indeed, the whole contour of the face, shaded by soft bands of fair hair, and with its deep blue eyes, was singularly soft and feminine, yet they would assuredly have been mistaken who would thence infer that Rosa's mind was such as generally accompanies such a conformation. Physiologists and romancers may say as they will, but it is nevertheless true that though to all appearance Rosa was gentle and even fragile, yet education had made her both courageous and firm. She had been so unfortunate as to lose her mother while yet in the first years of life ; but the loss had been amply compensated by the devoted affection of her father, who had early learned to look upon her as his greatest earthly consolation. He had made her from her very infancy, the object of unceasing vigilance, and of the tenderest care, and not even in those years when he had served in the Polish and in the French armies, did he for a moment forget his daughter, or entrust her to mercenary attendants. At a later period when, after the fall of Napoleon, the generosity of the Czar Alexander had permitted Poland to breathe more freely, and her children to live again in comparative tranquility, the Count retired to his estates, and devoted himself more exclusively



to the education of his daughter. In this, his favorite employment, he had been latterly ably assisted by the Abbe Choradzo, a man whose talents and acquirements were only exceeded by his fervent piety.

It was no way surprising that the mind of Rosa should have been even strongly influenced by the military life which she had shared with her father, and hence it was that while tenderly alive to the wants and sufferings of others, she could look on the most pitiable scene, and with her own hands give relief to the sufferer, and yet preserve an almost stoical coolness. Neither darkness, nor solitude, nor the din of battle, could disturb the firmness of her soul. She had been her father's companion in many a toilsome journey, and was wont to keep close by his side, smiling and calm, though mounted on a fiery charger. She associated herself in all her father's patriotic views, and this not only by her prayers and good wishes, but also by that active sympathy which follows events with eager interest, mourning for the disappointment and rejoicing in the probability of success, leaving nothing undone for the furtherance of the cause that might beseem a modest and a high-souled woman. Yet were all these lofty aspirations bent down and regulated by the strong and tutelary law of religious duty, and Rosa was all the more ardently devoted to the sublime faith of her fathers, for that the Russian clergy and the Russian government had made, and were making,

every effort to calumniate and defame it. Such, then, was Rosa, and who can wonder that she was the darling of her father's heart, or be surprised at the rivalry of Stanislaus and Raphael?

Rosa was praying, as we have observed, when her father entered, but she very soon arose and approached him.

"You have something to say to me, I perceive, my dear father," she said. "Tell me, is Casimir safe?"

"Oh, have no fear on that head, my child; your brother is beyond danger. The business of which I would speak to you, though grave enough, it is true, yet concerns yourself first of all."

"Concerns me, father!—how—what do you mean?"

"Yes, just yourself! and in order to save you any unnecessary suspense, I shall at once come to the fact, or rather facts. You are already aware that it was not my intention to bestow you in marriage until you had attained the age of twenty-one. We have often conversed on this subject, and with the less pain that we had always agreed that your marriage would in no case separate us, and would give me but a son the more to love. Now there is a mighty struggle at hand, in which I must necessarily run some risk, and my mind would be comparatively easy and free from care had I but the assurance that I had secured for you a protector on whose honor and affection I could

fully rely. Be not surprised, therefore, that I now introduce the subject, and I will add that it would give me a very sensible pleasure if we could now decide on him who is to be the future protector of my Rosa;—besides, I have two proposals to submit to you, which require, of course, an immediate decision as far as they are concerned.”

“Proposals!” repeated Rosa, with a smile and a blush.

“Even so,” replied the Count, “and it is precisely those same proposals which embarrass me more than a little. But, after all, as it is for you, and not me to decide on their respective merits, I hope to get through the difficulty with your aid. Two young noblemen, of distinguished rank, have proposed for your hand—you know them, and have known them long—it is Raphael and Stanislaus. So now, what think you?”

“And you, my father,” stammered Rosa, “what is your opinion?”

“I, my child!” returned the Count, “I have nothing to say but this, that my sole desire is to see you happy, and to know how best that happiness may be secured.”

“It is—it really is, most perplexing,” said Rosa, musingly.

“Indeed!” exclaimed the Count.

“But yet——”

“Hear me, Rosa,” interrupted her father, “I am fully aware that the matter requires mature

consideration, and would, therefore, advise you to postpone your answer till to-morrow. I should, however, remind you that you are not called upon to enter into any sort of engagement, and the question only is to decide between two rival candidates. I should imagine that it is not so very difficult. Only decide—and if you do accept either of these noblemen, you shall have as long time as you may desire before the irrevocable vow is made. Good night, then, my dear child, I shall now leave you to your reflections.”

“No, father, no—do not leave me yet!” exclaimed Rosa, in visible confusion. “You know I never wilfully conceal any thing from you, and now, if I am indeed called upon to make a choice so unexpectedly, you will not refuse me the benefit of your counsel?”

“I am only too happy, my dear Rosa, in the consciousness of possessing your confidence,” replied the Count, embracing his daughter as he spoke, “and if my advice can indeed aid you in this momentous affair, it will be freely and sincerely given. I must confess that I am really anxious to know whether either of my young friends, or which of them, has obtained a place in your heart, for on this information depends, in a great measure, my present and future peace of mind. Speak, then, my daughter, and fearlessly open your heart to your father.”

“Alas! my father! you are then about to see



a poor, weak heart exposed !” murmured Rosa, and she hid her face in her father’s bosom.

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## CHAPTER V.

“ I AM quite sure, Rosa,” replied the Count, “ that you have nothing to reveal which can alter my opinion of your rectitude and purity of heart.”

“ Spoken like the kindest and most indulgent of fathers,” murmured Rosa, “ but you shall see. In the first place, then, my dear father, it is long since I perceived the rival assiduities of these noblemen, and as far as Stanislaus is concerned, I must acknowledge, to my shame, that I have but too often given him room to believe that his attentions were very pleasing to me. Stanislaus is, as you know, full of life and spirits, and has, moreover, an extraordinary talent for drawing one into those conversations which, although trifling and light in their nature, are apt to excite the imagination, and when managed by one so adroit and skilful as Stanislaus, may be easily made to serve his purpose, giving to others the impression that two young people who laugh and chat away so merrily together, must have a good understanding between them. Then, on the other hand, Stanislaus has no equal in those nameless atten-

tions which are generally supposed to be all-powerful with our sex, and I cannot, and may not, deny that he has made himself exceedingly agreeable to me, and—and—may even have acquired a certain influence over my mind, so that—”

Here Rosa made a dead pause,—her cheeks were dyed with a crimson blush, and she evidently knew not how to finish the sentence.

“—So that,” said the Count, with a smile, catching up the unfinished sentence, “you have, on the whole, shown a pretty strong preference for Stanislaus, and are disposed to favor his wishes?”

“No, no, no, father!—no such thing, believe me!” cried Rosa, with surprising quickness and vivacity.

“Then what am I to think, dear Rosa! after what you have just said?”

“Nay, hear me to the end, father, before you form your judgment—I wish to show myself as I really am, so that you can the better give me your advice when you have heard all. At the same time that Stanislaus was paying me those dangerous assiduities, I could not avoid seeing the respectful attention of Ubinski, and I can truly say that I early became convinced of the immense difference between the two: the one was, to be sure, witty, gay and satirical; but the other was noble, and serious, and benevolent. Raphael, it is true, never soared aloft, as Stanislaus often did, on the wing of enthusiasm,

but when called forth by circumstances, he invariably proved himself far removed from all narrow and selfish prejudices, and in fact as possessing one of those lofty minds which truly ennoble our kind. Hence it was that in his presence I often reproached myself for giving way to those frivolous amusements, and blushed as I thought of how he must regard them. At such moments Stanislaus fell immeasurably in my estimation, and, in short, I could never *say* of him what I have ever *thought* of—of—the other. Ah! father! with what entire confidence can a woman lean on the arm of one like Raphael, and how natural it is for her to love one so every way noble—one of whose virtues she has so much reason to be proud!—Such, then, is my opinion of these young noblemen, and now, my dear father, you can decide for me—at least, I hope so.”

“Then my opinion is, that you have only suffered Stanislaus to catch hold of your imagination, while Raphael has reached your heart, and most worthy he is of any woman’s love.”

“I am truly rejoiced to hear you say so!” Rosa exclaimed, with artless fervor.

“And why not decide at once in Raphael’s favor?”

“Ah! I was afraid that I could never be worthy of him,” said Rosa, in a subdued voice, “and I feared, besides, that I had, although unintentionally, given Stanislaus too much encouragement to draw myself out with fitting grace.”

“Have you given him any sort of promise?”

“Never—never, father! nor any thing that even he could interpret as such. No, the only thing wherewith I have to reproach myself is the not having shunned those occasions which brought us in close connexion with each other, particularly as my indiscretion in those matters may seem to denote a preference which I never really or seriously felt. The truth is that the exquisite charms of his manner and conversation have at times induced me to pay him too much attention—more than he deserved. Yet I solemnly repeat to you that I have never regarded him with that admiration—that—that deep feeling with which I have long looked upon his rival.”

“My dear child,” said the Count, with affectionate gravity, “you must neither be surprised nor afflicted by those apparent contradictions which seemed to have troubled you more than enough. They are in perfect accordance with our poor, weak nature, seeing that we cannot help being dazzled and attracted, it may even be by a brilliant and specious exterior; but the rational and thinking mind easily discerns the real character beneath all its glittering and meretricious ornaments, and despising the hollow cheat, it turns with intuitive respect and admiration to where it discovers true merit and unostentatious nobleness. And I must say, Rosa, that you have thus shown considerable penetration. Stanislaus is, beyond all doubt, brilliant and accomplished, but is far too much



devoted to pleasure ever to become a great man;—he is, indeed, one of those who entirely depend on chance, and may turn to good or evil, just as circumstances happen. Raphael, on the contrary, will on every possible occasion, prove himself both high-minded and upright—and will be sure to be one day a distinguished man. For my part, though our political opinions are entirely different, I would have no hesitation in confiding to him my dearest earthly treasure—am I then to understand that you authorise me to give him a favorable answer?”

“You know we are not to be separated, father!” cried Rosa, as she threw herself on his neck, giving no more direct answer to his question.

“Oh! that is understood!” returned the Count, with a gratified smile. “And now, my sweet child, farewell till to-morrow.”

Whilst the Count seeks his own chamber, after having ascertained that all necessary precautions had been taken against a surprise from the Russians, let us penetrate, for a moment, to that of Stanislaus. Reclining on a sofa, with his feet extended in front of a bright fire, he was carelessly glancing over some papers which Firley, his steward, had presented for his inspection. This Firley was apparently between forty and fifty years of age, in stature but little above the middle size, with a florid and rather jocund countenance, and a pair of quick and restless eyes, whose habitual expression was that of sly cunning.

“Firley,” said Stanislaus, with a yawn, as he put away the last of the documents, “can you tell me why I have entrusted to you the management of my affairs?”

“Why, my lord! it was, I suppose, in order to get rid of a host of troublesome details which would be entirely unworthy the notice of a nobleman of your rank.”

“You speak like a book, my good fellow—but why, then, do you bore me to death with these wretched scrawls of petitions and bills, and the Lord knows what? Surely I have other things to attend to, and you know it.”

“Yes, but, my lord will please to remember that the first document which I have had the honor to place in your hands, urgently insists that your lordship may take cognizance of the dispute. It is nothing less than a formal complaint of a certain horsewhipping administered to some of these heathens who actually denied their just debts, and stoutly refused their lawful amount of labor. But, perhaps I was wrong in forcing the wretches to do their duty.”

“Hold now, Firley! have I not already told you that I would prefer seeing you treat these people less harshly? Using the whip is apt to irritate them, and its application is truly revolting.”

“And yet, my lord, you must have your coffers well filled—you must have your equipage, your horses, your dogs, all in a style and a quality worthy of your noble name. Well, now, I declare to you, that if you want to set

up for a philanthropist, you will be presently as poor as Job himself."

"Well, Firley, I leave it all to yourself, seeing that you are my providence; and, after all, what are these serfs made for but to serve their lords? So, now, let us speak of something else. I have at length made that great attempt—to-day I have proposed for the Lady Rosa, and have every reason to hope that I shall be accepted. So you see, Firley, we have to raise funds for the wedding, and a magnificent one it must needs be. Let me have no more of your tiresome lectures on the insufficiency of my revenue, in anticipation of which you have, as I well know, grievously oppressed my vassals. For yourself, my worthy ex-Attorney, you are far too clever to be much embarrassed by such a trifling difficulty as this. You can cut down certain woods, or even, if necessary, dispose of a farm or two, as the fortune of my intended bride will more than repair the breach. And then for the future, you know, marriage will bring order and economy, and all such virtues. But what the deuce makes you look so gloomy, Firley, for all the world as though I had been speaking of a funeral. What have you got to say?"

"Alas! my lord; you cannot but know that in my sincere devotion to your lordship's interest, I have many reasons to dread this marriage. First of all is, the suspicion with which the Count is looked upon by the government—"

"But, Firley, you know my political opinions."

"Yes, my lord, I know them, and while I admire their nobleness, cannot help deploring that such opinions should be yours. The truth is, that a man of business, accustomed to practice the art of calculation, views this matter in a far different light, and can see no feasible chance of success in a game which stands one to ten. The rebellion will be speedily crushed, and, what is worse, your lordship will be ruined. Alas! I can even foresee the sequestration of your estates, and my honored master forced to seek a precarious living in a foreign land."

"The perspective is not very inviting, I grant you," replied Stanislaus, with a somewhat melancholy smile, "but fortunately it is only imaginary. Fear is apt to exaggerate danger, and as to me, I know not what fear is. Notwithstanding all the obstacles which stand in our way, I do hope for a brilliant victory, and then, Firley, my friend, only think of the splendid reward which awaits us!"

"Yes, a splendid reward, truly; but, unfortunately, it will be for the people, who will at once declare themselves on a level with the nobility, and pull down all your hereditary privileges."

"Why, Firley, that is sheer absurdity," cried the haughty noble; "think you we shall be so foolish as to permit them?"

"My Lord," returned Firley, with the utmost coolness "when once you have torn away the



dyke, it is folly to attempt to restrain the torrent."

"In short, Firley," cried Stanislaus, with the impatience of a man who relishes against his own will the reasoning of his adversary, "in short, my resolution is fixed, and I am sure you would not be the man to advise me to change it."

"Most certainly, I shall advise my master to nothing that might compromise his honor; nevertheless, it is hard for any one so entirely devoted to him as I am, to see him enter upon the road to destruction, without at least warning him of his danger. Could you not at least postpone your marriage? Only think, my noble lord, what a time it is for you to declare yourself. In the first place, the castle is almost in a state of siege—the Count's son is accused of high treason—they are on his trail, and the Russian soldiers are confident that before sunset to-morrow they will have him sure. Yet this is the moment your lordship is pleased to choose for allying yourself with this unfortunate family."

"Firley, my good fellow, you know not what it is to be the slave of a beautiful girl; therefore, I can excuse your cold calculations. But are you sure that these Russians have traced Casimir?"

"They justly suppose that he cannot be far from here."

"They may not be much mistaken, Firley.

—nay, I may as well tell you that Casimir is in the castle, and safe from danger. But you must employ all your address to persuade them that he is gone towards Grodno for the purpose of raising the people, and is thence to proceed to Wilna, in order to organise the revolution there. This hint, carefully spread amongst them, will soon rid us of our troublesome visitors, who have the assurance to talk of remaining here in garrison, though we are sufficiently strong to disarm them at the first alarm. So now you know what I expect of you, and I will reckon on your doing your duty!”

“My lord, I will do anything that is agreeable to you. So God bless your lordship.”

“Good night, Firley.” So away went the honest Firley, and the first thing he did, after leaving his master, was to write a note, in a disguised hand, and with numerous orthographical errors (wilful, of course,) as though it came from a servant, and addressed to the officer in command of the Russian detachment. The note was left unsealed, and ran as follows:—

“The wretch of whom you are in pursuit is still in the castle. I warn you, however, that your party is not strong enough to arrest him. So you must immediately procure a larger force. This comes from

A FRIEND.

This will at once show what sort of a man

Firley was. But how had he obtained so much influence over a man of honor, as Stanislaus really was? The enigma is easy of solution: Stanislaus, given up heart and soul to the pursuit of pleasure, had the greatest aversion to anything like business. Firley, who had served his full time to an attorney famous only for his dishonesty, was himself highly accomplished in all the arts of roguery. He had for some time practised the law on his own account, when circumstances having introduced him to Stanislaus, he had quickly contrived to make himself useful, nay, indispensable to the thoughtless young nobleman. After a little while he became his master's chief confidant, and faithful servant that he was! availed himself of that trust to enrich himself, by communicating what was worth anything, to the government; but whether he had still some lingering scruples, or through gratitude for the rich hordes he was daily accumulating, or that he wished to retain his hold of the prey, it is certain that he made it a point to excuse his lord to the government for the crimes wherewith he himself accused him, giving as a reason, that he had strong hopes of his conversion from the cause of rebellion. It will, therefore, be easily understood that the worthy steward had every thing to fear from the proposed marriage, and he secretly vowed to raise such obstacles that it never could come to pass.

We shall leave this personage for the present, but ere we drop the curtain for the night on the guests and inhabitants of the castle, let us glance at a letter written by Raphael to his grandmother (his only near relation) after his private interview with the Count :

*"My Dear Mother",—*You know how anxious and how irresolute I was when I quitted you, and you cannot but remember those long conversations in which we discussed the chances for and against my success with the Lady Rosa. You kindly exhorted me, at my departure, not to despair, giving many reasons, which then appeared to me excellent. Yet I was sad at heart, and so fearful, that I postponed the crisis as long as I possibly could. But I had promised you to bring back a decisive answer, and I determined to know the worst or the best at once. When on my way hither, and not far from the castle, I encountered Stanislaus Dewello, and an explanation followed, which had at first decided me to return home. Stanislaus assured me in the most explicit terms that he was all but sure of the Lady Rosa, and urged me, therefore, to withdraw my pretensions. Had this request been less arrogantly made, after hearing what I had heard, I should certainly have yielded; but Stanislaus spoke so haughtily, and even contemptuously, that I must own the spirit of opposition was strengthened within me, and I resolved to go on and make my proposal to the



Count as soon as an opportunity offered. I was welcomed by that nobleman (as you had predicted) in the most paternal manner; but his daughter—what am I to expect from her? Were I less acquainted with her peculiar turn of mind, I might the more easily believe that she had been attracted by the rare perfections of Stanislaus, who sings with so much taste, dances beyond all competition, and has indeed all those graceful accomplishments which might win a maiden's love. But if my estimate of Rosa's character be correct (and your opinion agrees with mine,) her mind is of a serious caste, and her heart is as pure as it is good and tender. Her views are high and noble, and I am almost sure that she mingles in the frivolous amusements of her age and of her circle with secret contempt. Often have I observed her steal away from a gay assembly to fulfil some duty of religion or charity, and I believe her a Christian in the fullest acceptation of the word.—Do you, then, think it possible, my mother, that God will ever give up such a woman to the control of a spendthrift and a coxcomb? For my part, I cannot believe it; and notwithstanding my unworthiness of such a blessing, there are moments when, after having considered the purity of my intentions, and my entire devotion to her happiness, I cannot help fancying that all is not yet lost, and that I may be, after all, nearer the goal than my gay rival. But this train of thought is soon dispelled, as I recall the strange contra-

dictions and caprices to which we are all more or less subject, and then I reluctantly confess that with all the immense difference between Rosa and Stanislaus, they may yet be destined for each other. Should such be the case, pity me, my dear mother, but do not grieve for my disappointment for it will necessarily be the will of God, and as such, I must endeavour to bear it as cheerfully as I can. As a Christian, I am convinced that happiness here below is not for us: we are here to work out our salvation, and to gain the heavenly inheritance; our life is, therefore, one of ceaseless warfare, as otherwise we cannot obtain the prize, and God in his great mercy knowing that this fearful struggle is repugnant to our nature, is pleased to urge us on by his divine grace. If I am to lose Rosa, the loss will certainly be a grievous trial, but I shall offer it up to God, as a sacrifice of great price. And then I constantly repeat to myself, that if I am thus deprived of what I fondly consider would bring happiness to me, I can at least devote myself to promote that of others—yours, in the first place, my ever dear mother, and that of all within my reach. And then, by an admirable arrangement of Providence, do we not become happy ourselves in resigning our will to the will of God, and in performing our duty? Is there, in fact, any felicity to be compared with that of a good conscience and a will perfectly resigned? Let poets exaggerate as they may the tortures of disappointed love, but it is

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nevertheless certain that poor human nature is as inconstant in its griefs as in its joys—one day it loves, or grieves; the next it forgets both love and grief, and time sweeps away, with more or less rapidity, all our vain, earth-born feelings. Our affections only acquire strength and stability when we give them wholly to God. I shall now leave off, my dearest mother, in order to seek repose, if it is to be found, but I shall not close my letter till I have received my answer from your old friend, the Count.”

It was late when Raphael threw himself on his bed, and he was only awoke next morning by a light tapping at his chamber door.

“Who is there?” he asked, as he hastily donned his garments. The answer was “Count Bialewski.”

## CHAPTER VI.

RECOGNIZING at once the voice of the Count, Raphael opened the door and stood pale and motionless before him.

"What is the matter, Raphael?" asked the Count in a cheerful voice, "Is it not your father who comes to shake hands with you this morning?"

"Can it be possible!" cried the young man, as he threw himself into the arms of the Count.

"Yes, very possible!" rejoined the latter, and he pressed Raphael to his heart. "My daughter has confessed to me that you hold the very highest place in her esteem, and in fact, receives your proposal as graciously as even you could desire."

"Oh! it is too much—it is too much!" repeated Raphael, again and again, unable to give expression to the joy of his heart.

"Pardon me, my young friend, it is not enough, for you must instantly appear on the field in front of the enemy. In a word, I want to present you to Rosa as my son and her affianced husband."

"Oh! let us go at once—I am ready."

"Wait a moment, my dear fellow! had you not better complete your toilet! There, son, let me assist you, for I see you are by far too much agitated."—And the Count smiled at the youth-



ful eagerness of his friend. "An old officer like myself, you know, is so accustomed to inspect the appearance of his men before he leads them to the charge, that the habit becomes, as it were, instinctive."

Raphael, however, was soon ready, and followed the Count with a hurried step. In the meantime Rosa was not less agitated; her father had announced Raphael's visit, and however great might have been her pleasure, her embarrassment was truly painful. She took a book and sat down near the fire; then rising suddenly, she glanced at her reflection in an opposite mirror, to see that her dress was properly arranged: then, approaching a window, she stood gazing listlessly out for some minutes—going to the door, she listened, and hearing distant footsteps in the corridor, she threw herself again upon her seat, blushing and breathless. At length, when her father entered with Raphael, she had scarcely strength to rise and advance to meet them.

"My dear child," said the Count archly, as he kissed his daughter's fair brow, "I have brought hither my son Raphael, who, as such, is to be admitted to a high position in your affections, is he not?"

"Will Rosa deign to receive me with favour?" added Raphael, with a touching expression of respectful tenderness in his dark, thoughtful eyes. "And yet I know not how I can prove myself worthy of her regard."

“Oh, my lord!” returned Rosa quickly, “you are pleased to underrate your own merits, but I am not the less aware of their excellence, and—and—” She paused, in evident embarrassment, fearful that she had said too much.

“Sweet Rosa,” cried Raphael, in unqualified delight, “what earthly sacrifice would I deem too great to testify my gratitude for your almost unhopèd-for kindness!” and taking her unreluctant hand he raised it respectfully to his lips.

“And now, my children,” said the Count earnestly, “you will promise me that from this day forward you will be true and faithful to each other; and I know you both well enough to be convinced that the promise will be faithfully kept. For myself, it will enable me to brave all the chances of war without apprehension, so that I can devote myself as I would wish to the service of my unfortunate country.”

“Ah! my father!” exclaimed Rosa, with artless fervor, “I am sure God will preserve you through every danger, for I will pray to him earnestly and unceasingly.”

“May his holy will be done in all things,” replied the Count, “and if we submit to it in a proper spirit we shall be happy, come what may; moreover, I am so happy at this moment that I would not give expression to any saddening fear. We shall now descend to the chapel where the priest and two of our good friends

await us, and then, affianced before God's holy altar, you can calmly and trustingly look forward to the moment when you shall be irrevocably united. Come, my children."

Raphael, in a tumult of joy and surprise, offered his arm to Rosa, and they followed the Count to the chapel. They approached the altar with becoming reverence; the Count deposited on a plate of chased silver a diamond ring which was an heir-loom in his family, and Raphael placed by its side another jewelled ring, in which was set a miniature of his mother. After the blessing had been pronounced the betrothed exchanged their rings, then retiring to the vestibule, they threw themselves on their knees before the Count, who embraced them with tears of joy. It was subsequently agreed that, without affecting any extraordinary restraint, they should all be silent on the subject of the ceremony which had taken place. "And now," added the Count, "let us rejoin our friends."

It was about eight o'clock, yet the bright day-beam had scarcely dispelled the lingering shadows of the morning twilight; the firmament, in its deep opal blue, thinly veiled by transparent clouds, announced another of those cold, clear days, which are scattered over the dreary time of winter as harbingers of the spring. At that moment the Castle resembled a fortress taken by assault; a constantly increasing multitude fronted its lofty gates, and the esplanade

was covered with the population of the neighboring hamlets armed with sticks and rusty guns. The court-yards were filled with guards and huntsmen, some on horseback and others on foot, some blowing a merry blast on their hunting-horns, while others set up the coupled and baying hounds, all of which it may easily be imagined, made a wild and clamorous uproar. At first the Russian garrison which had, on the previous evening, taken possession of the castle, attempted to keep the people from entering, but very soon they were penned up by the curious and astonished multitude in a corner of the court-yard where the only thing they could do was to assume a defensive attitude, and establish a *picquet* at a grating in the wall, so as to keep a watch on those who went and came.

In the meantime the Count passed on into the immense hall, where all that had any pretensions to gentle blood were already assembled. Raphael came after and by his side, leaning on his arm, was Rosa, more charming than ever in her hunting dress, her fair tresses hanging in ringlets on her shoulders and her beautiful eyes cast to the ground, as though to conceal the radiant joy by which they were just then animated. The progress of the party was necessarily slow, being every moment arrested by the salutations of their friends and acquaintances. The first impulse of Stanislaus, when he caught a glimpse of Rosa was to dart forward and offer his arm, but another glance discovered Raphael, and his



fine countenance beaming with delight was singularly unwelcome to Stanislaus, who became suddenly fearful that after all he might be defeated. The surprise, nay, consternation so visible on the speaking features of the young noble was quickly perceived by the Count, who, remembering that he owed him a formal answer, took him aside into the embrasure of a window:

"My dear friend," said he, "I have to thank you for the proposal yesterday made by you through my son, and must express my regret that it is not in my power to give you a favorable answer. I am bound to tell you, with the frankness that becomes a soldier, that my daughter has made her final decision, and for me I have left the matter entirely to herself."

"I must, then, have been deceiving myself," muttered Stanislaus, in an embarrassment that he could not conceal, "as I should certainly never have made such a proposal had I dreamed of your daughter's refusal. However, since the Lady Rosa has made her choice, I have only to retire from the field the best way I can."

"But, my dear Stanislaus," exclaimed the Count, with that military vivacity which never quitted him, "we cannot part thus. Had we before us the prospect of a series of festivities, I should never think of urging you to remain amongst us, but the truth is, that though my daughter has been, as it were, forced by circumstances to pronounce her decision, yet the matter

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rests there for the present. No, no,—other scenes now await us, wherein your position is prominently marked, and I am sure that our private affairs will be forgotten in the more engrossing interests of the common cause!”

“God forbid, my lord,” Stanislaus exclaimed with noble energy, “God forbid that I should be tempted to forget my engagements with you. On the contrary, I hope to give you every proof of my devotion to our national cause!”

“You will, then, remain?” said the Count, extending his hand to Stanislaus.

“Certainly I will.”

“And you will permit me now to leave you in order to speak with some of these gentlemen?”

“Oh! pray make no ceremony with me!” The Count walked away, and breakfast was just then announced.—The repast which ushered in the chase was not without importance in Poland, for not only the guests, but all the subordinates who were to figure in the sport had a right to take their seats around the truly hospitable board, and the halls were crowded with people who eagerly pressed forward for their turn at the table. From time immemorial a hunting party given by a noble was looked upon as a popular festival, in which all had a right to share; but since Poland, in her enslaved condition, had ceased to be a martial nation, it seemed as though the fiery ardor of her sons had transferred itself to this noble and manly

sport where courage, activity, and skill might yet be displayed. Those nobles and gentlemen who had no longer the right or privilege of maintaining bands of soldiers at their own expense, now applied all their resources to keep up magnificent hunting trains—some great lords there were who kept all the year round no less than three hundred men, whose sole business it was to follow them to the chase, in which they were likewise joined by friends and acquaintances, and by their neighbours of all ranks in society. On such occasions, indeed, whole villages rose with one consent, and rushed with a stunning shout into the woods. This, then, was just the scene going forward in Count Bialewski's castle: wine, beer, mead and brandy flowed around like water, while the servants quickly followed each other carrying in immense dishes of a made-up substance called *rogue's hash*, composed of *saur kraut*, sausages, pork, and other meats all mixed up together, and around these dishes the hungry huntsmen eagerly thronged. Nor were the peasantry denied a seat at the board, and a brimming glass. This formidable repast was at length concluded, and the signal for departure was given. The Count had, however, provided for the safety of the castle in case of any sudden attack, and when he presented himself at the head of his numerous retinue at the gate of the court-yard, he saw the Russian troop drawn up in order of battle, and its commander advance towards him.

"My lord Count," said the Russian commander, "my instructions require that I should not permit your departure from the castle, and I trust you will see the necessity of yielding with a good grace to this trifling restraint."

"You will doubtless favor me with the reasons for this very harsh proceeding, my good sir?" replied the Count with difficulty restraining his indignation.

"My lord, orders are sent to me, I transmit them to my men, and am bound to see that they are executed. This is all that belongs to me, and I have nothing to do with causes or motives."

"Well, sir!" returned the Count with the utmost coolness, "I have no mind to obey your orders, and have as you see, a sufficient escort to continue my journey without your leave. I would warn you, however, for your own sake, to avoid an unequal struggle which would be sure to end in the total annihilation of your troop."

"Such being your lordship's intentions, you are prepared, I suppose, to accept their responsibility, having doubtless reflected maturely on what you are about to do. For me, the only thing I can now do is to keep my men on the defensive, and to enter my protest against what I consider an act of rebellion."

"Sir, it would require an army to restrain Poles when setting out for the chase." And so saying the Count spurred his courser, and beck-



oned to his numerous train to follow, his friends having silently awaited the conclusion of the recent dialogue, evidently well disposed to second the warlike defiance of their host. This incident had no other result than that of arousing to a high pitch the martial enthusiasm of the hunters, who speedily filled the air with their national airs and many a shout of exuberant patriotism. And so commenced the great chase, apparently directed against the wolves, but in reality to merge into a combat still fiercer and more determined. Yet the secret of the conspiracy was still known but to a few of the leaders, who were to retire at an appointed time to a secluded glade within the depths of the forest to concert their projects. In the meantime the great body of the hunters were preparing to form an immense circle around the savage animals who were heard howling in the distance. The wolf-chase in Poland may be regarded as a truly defensive war, required for the common safety. From the beginning of November till the end of February these ferocious beasts pour over the country in immense numbers, sweep through the villages, and tear away the domestic animals even from their stables, and wo to the unlucky traveller who journeys alone on their path, for neither the rapidity of his horse nor his own courage, even though he be well armed, can save him from a horrid death. Roaming about in bands of thirty or forty they throw themselves with

ravenous fury on whatever crosses their path, and it requires a full troop of hardy and warlike men to beat them back. It is then easy to conceive the great utility of these public hunts, and the ardor with which all engage in them. Some days before the projected party, the wood-rangers were sent to survey the lodging of the particular band it was intended to destroy; from their station by night in the topmost branches of high trees, these men imitated the cry of an old wolf, whereupon the cubs set up a hideous howling, and thus disclosed the place of their concealment to their wily foes. The lodgement of the wolves being thus discovered, they were retained there till the day fixed for the hunt by throwing in amongst them a quantity of worthless carrion.

Arrived near the appointed place, a short pause was made in order to restore order amongst the hunters, whereupon the head game-keeper, who was the real director of the chase, proceeded to assign to each individual his post and his duties. Before the strong net-work placed by his orders at all the principal openings, he stationed men armed with huge sticks and sheltered behind the trees; then between the net at every thirty paces he placed the hunters, taking care that they were not under scent. The young lads who were to make the beat held themselves as close as possible to the spot whence they were to start the dogs at the foe. As for the dogs, they were no sooner freed

from their lashings, than they flew with the rapidity of lightning into the underwood; the huntsmen blew their horns, and the chase instantly began. With eye fixed, ear strained, and finger on his trigger, each hunter remained motionless. The deepest silence reigns around, when suddenly one of the dogs gives tongue, then another, and another, and soon the whole pack joins in the clamor. The echoes of the forest catch up the noise, now increased an hundred fold by the cries of the hunters, the cracking of whips, and the loud neighing of the affrighted horses. On the other side the lads have broken the beat crying out with all their might and striking the trees with their sticks. Surprised and terrified, the wolves venture out, to seek safety in flight, but a murderous volley is poured in on them from all sides, and those who escape the lead, rush madly into the nets. And then the horns sound without intermission that glorious finale—"Death to the wolves, and victory to the hunters."

The battle once gained, the order established by the head keeper was quickly broken up, all pressing eagerly forward to witness its results, while groups of hunters are seen plunging here and there into the thicket in pursuit of the scattered remains of the band. Meanwhile, Rosa, surrounded by some of her friends, and attended by the most experienced huntsmen, had courageously led on the main body, while her father, with the other conspirators, had retired to their

place of meeting. Stanislaus alone was not found amongst them. In the tumult and wretchedness of his mind one thought alone restrains him from giving way to the fierce promptings of his frenzied jealousy. It is still possible, he thinks, that Rosa may not have voluntarily rejected him—might she not have accepted his rival through the influence of her father, and by his commands? This point he must speedily have decided.

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## CHAPTER VII.

NOTWITHSTANDING his recent explanation with the Count, Stanislaus could not bring himself to believe that he was entirely rejected, and restraining with difficulty the motions of his wounded self-love, he watched impatiently for an opportunity to speak with Rosa. But, alas! Raphael was ever by her side, watching over her safety with the tenderest solicitude, and anticipating with careful foresight the various dangers of the chase. He spoke to her, too, in a low, earnest voice, and Rosa listened with an interest so great as though nothing could have diverted her attention from what he was saying. And Stanislaus followed at the distance of a hundred paces or so, his heart rent and torn by alternate shame and jealousy, as he



note all their motions. It is probable that no such opportunity as he desired would have presented itself had not the preconcerted signal announced from a distance that the hour of meeting for the patriots was come, whereupon Raphael plunged his horse into the thicket, and disappeared in the direction of the sound. And had Stanislaus listened to the voice of honour or of duty he, too, would have gone; but allowing himself to be governed by his evil passions, he spurred his charger, and quickly rode up to Rosa. The latter, surprised by seeing him so suddenly, and in such visible agitation, exclaimed in a faltering voice:

"I was far from expecting to see you here, M. Dewello; I thought you were gone to the meeting."

"No! Lady Rosa," replied Stanislaus, with an emotion which he no longer sought to control, "I am by your side, most probably for the last time."

"What do you mean, I pray you?"

"You cannot be ignorant of my meaning, if it be true that you have voluntarily rejected the proposal which I yesterday had the honor to transmit to your father."

"Voluntarily!" repeated Rosa, with emphasis; "Are you aware that you do my father a grievous wrong to suppose him capable of coercing my will?"

"Then, lady, it is you who repulse me?" cried Stanislaus, with swelling indignation.

"The word is a harsh one, and I should never have used it in this case," returned Rosa, calmly; "but it is certainly true that I have accepted a nobleman for whom I have ever professed and entertained the most profound esteem."

"That is giving me to understand exactly what you think of me, and I should retire without a word more, cursing the day when I saw you first. Nevertheless I will so far humble myself as to explain to you the motive which induced me to seek an interview in which I have played no very dignified part in your eyes. It is true that though I have never dared to tell you so, you were the star of my future, and for two whole years I have devoted my every thought to you, which you could not but perceive. During those two fatal years there were times when I ventured to think that my attentions were acceptable to you, and (alas! how cruelly am I punished for my presumption!) I even dared to flatter myself that I stood higher in your favor than any of my rivals. I have been deceived it appears, but say, Lady Rosa, was the fault or error altogether mine?"

Stanislaus paused, believing that his question was most embarrassing for one so frank and sincere as Rosa. The latter was, indeed, puzzled what to say, and sometime elapsed before she ventured to reply; yet when she spoke her voice was calm and even firm.

"I was hesitating whether I should at all answer you, and whether respect for myself did

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not imperatively call upon me to put a stop at once to a conversation wherein I am every moment treated with unbecoming levity. I have at length decided to reply, less to justify myself, it may be, than to make known to you a certain order of ideas with which you appear to be wholly unacquainted. Yes! I have committed a fault in admitting, as perfectly innocent, those thousand little intimacies which society willingly sanctions; I have erred in putting faith in the disinterestedness of those who spontaneously loaded me with their kind attention, and talked so nobly and so movingly of friendship and esteem. I should have known that people of the world calculate amid their very pleasures and amusements, and will not take the slightest trouble without hope of a three-fold remuneration. I should have turned aside from those flowers which were strewed on my path but to hide its pitfalls, and should, above all, have remembered that innocence is an object of ridicule to that world, who, if permitted, will speedily tarnish its purity and wither its freshness. Simplicity and credulity are the faults whereof I have been guilty. Suffer me to tell you, however, that I think it is only myself who has a right to condemn these errors, and that I had severely done, before you took upon you to call me to account. I deny, therefore, your idle accusations. You have never been deceived by me, and to end as I have begun, I must tell you that if there were

any deception in the case it was practised by you, when you knowingly surrounded me with snares, and wrested my simplest words and deeds into a meaning all your own. I have confided in you because I looked upon you as a friend, and I defy you to produce a single word of mine which could be made to bear any other interpretation."

In the course of this address Rosa had insensibly displayed all the masculine energy of her nature, her look and voice giving double force to the firmness and decision of her reply. Stanislaus was utterly confounded by the justice as well as the keenness of her reproach, and though his whole frame trembled with passion, he sought only to secure his retreat. "To persist now," said he, "would be indeed to overstep the bounds of respect. I am perfectly well aware of those whom I have to blame for your opinion of me, and so I take my leave, promising never again to obtrude myself upon you!"

Thereupon he turned down the first path, and throwing the reins on his horse's neck, permitted him to go on at random. His soul at that moment resembled a tempestuous sea, whose furious waves lash each other on with ceaseless violence: disappointment, envy, hatred and jealousy held alternate possession of his mind, each leaving behind, as it passed away, a sting of deadly venom. Whither will he go?—what must he do?—One thing is certain, Raphael must be the victim, and already he thirsts for his



blood, and will force him to a combat even if it be necessary to spit upon his face. And then the Count—oh! yes! he can do for him, too—he will defeat all his projects—he will have a glorious revenge by informing the government of his plotting and planning, and that will be sure destruction. At this latter idea, Stanislaus stopt short a moment, and he felt the blush of shame kindling on his cheek, and blending with that of anger. Ha, would not that step be sure to disgrace him for ever? Well, then, he will openly declare himself the enemy of the Count; he will meet him sword in hand on the battlefield, and there seek an honourable revenge.—Yes, but then he would also be the enemy of his country, and were her defenders to obtain the victory, what a withering blow that would be! No, no—he cannot thus dishonour himself, and a sudden re-action of feeling urged him to join the assembly. With ill-suppressed emotion, he turned his steed towards the appointed rendezvous, muttering as he went, “I know how to obtain satisfaction without compromising my honour.”

While Stanislaus made his toilsome way through the thick underwood, he was followed afar off by his worthy steward, Firley, who, having early in the day noticed his master's unusual dejection, was determined to find out its cause. The animated manner in which Stanislaus had spoken to the young Countess (for Firley was too far off to hear the conversation) and then

the abrupt termination of that interview had sorely puzzled the good man. He suspected that Stanislaus had been rejected, though if so, he was at a loss to understand why, as the only thing he had feared was that his success was certain; but now he had seen that his master was enraged, and driving his horse like a madman through the copse, he at once determined to appear before him if he possibly could, in order to turn his violent anger to some account. But what was his astonishment when, after an hour's riding, he saw Stanislaus enter a glade, where a number of gentlemen were assembled, in the midst of whom was the Count.—Great was the joy of the honest steward, as creeping on all fours, he reached a spot where he could hear all that might be said.

This meeting was held in the midst of the forest, but far removed from the hunt, which was so managed as to keep aloof from this direction. This spot had been the scene of many a former conference, and was admirably suited to the purpose, being the bottom of a profound ravine, whose sides were overgrown with bushes, and the whole shaded by enormous pine trees, so as to form an almost impenetrable obscurity—at least there was, even in daylight, a gloom like that of twilight. There were present on that occasion about twenty individuals, almost all of the higher nobility, with four or five delegates from some of the neighboring cities, Grodno and Wilna among the rest. The Count

was evidently the leader, and being fully sensible of the value of time when the enemy was actually in possession of his own castle, and might so easily obtain strong reinforcements, he proceeded at once to relate with the most animated gestures the late occurrences which had taken place in Warsaw, "and here," said he, laying his hand on his son's shoulder, "here is one who can bear ocular testimony to what I have told you. This, then, is the reason why I dared this morning to assert my independence, as you saw—the time of slavery is past—that of freedom is dawning on us again!"

At these words an indiscribable enthusiasm took possession of all present, and forgetful of their own safety a universal cry arose of "Liberty and Poland!"

"Now, my lords and gentleman!" cried the Count with resistless energy, "there is no more time to foresee, to deliberate, or to plan; we must act—promptly and resolutely. The grand struggle has commenced, and its success may depend on our speedy intervention. If Lithuania rises simultaneously, and interposes between the army of the Grand Duke Constantine, encamped under the walls of Warsaw and the reinforcements which he expects from Russia, we can easily subdue that army, disheartened as it is by a first defeat—we can then form a junction with our valiant brethren of Warsaw and await on our frontiers the new Russian forces. Only let us now show ourselves worthy of the task

confided to us, and we go far to secure to our country that independence of which treachery and lawless violence have deprived her. Our fathers have protested an hundred times against this odious yoke of hypocritical and brutal power—let us, as they did, shed the last drop of our blood to maintain our rights against all proscription. In three days, my friends, our entire force must march on Grodno, thence, doubled and trebled (as I trust it will be) we shall proceed to Wilna, whence we may command all Lithuania. Remember ever that wherever we go our oppressed brethren await us as their liberators. This very day I hoist the national banner in every quarter of my domains, and if you are willing, we shall name my castle as our centre of operations, as I have been appointed to the command in these parts. My claims to that high honor you all know—I began my military career under Kosciusko, and grew old under Napoleon's eagles—I have won my military rank step by step at the price of my best blood."

"Yes! Yes! none so fit as you to be our chief!" cried out the assembled Poles with one voice—"we willingly ratify the appointment, and will follow wherever you chose to lead."

"Let us then proceed at once to business," said the Count, "and in order to act with as much prudence as boldness, we must first enumerate our forces, so as to know exactly how to dispose of ourselves to the best advantage."



You will each have the goodness to mention the number of men that you can reasonably expect to bring to the field. My noble friend Ubinski, who is at length associated in our projects, has undertaken to make the calculation and report it to us."

They then went rapidly on with this census of the future soldiers of Poland, fearful of making longer delay, lest it might give rise to suspicions which might then be troublesome. Whilst Raphael was engaged in taking down the numbers, the others eagerly awaiting the result, one of the noblemen present, Leopold Majoski, (who has already been mentioned as a former candidate for Rosa's hand) observed that Stanislaus Dewello was absent.

"Oh!" said the Count, quickly; "I know the cause of his absence, but it is just the same as though he were amongst us."

"Undoubtedly," rejoined Leopold, "I will answer for my friend Stanislaus!"

"My lords and gentlemen," said Raphael, as he finished his calculation, "the sum total of our force amounts to three thousand men, of whom six hundred are horsemen, fully equipped."

"Bravo!" cried the Count, gaily, "with such a force as that I shall take Grodno almost without a shot, and there our numbers will be at least doubled, I mean by armed and disciplined men, for, of course, we shall be everywhere sustained by the people. So then, comrades all! in three days we meet again around the

castle of Bialewski, and you know there are heaps of arms concealed in those woods for those who may want them. Thank God, the moment draws nigh when we shall fight and die, if necessary, for Poland!"

Just as the assembly divided itself into two or three groups, in order to rejoin the hunters, Stanislaus appeared amongst them. He was quickly surrounded by a number of his friends, who all remarked his extreme agitation, and sought to learn its cause.

"Oh! it is nothing, my good friends—absolutely nothing!" answered Stanislaus, making a strong effort to assume composure, "my horse took it into his head to run away with me, and the course he selected was anything but a pleasant one—so that's all, I do assure you." He was then informed of what had passed at the meeting, and he, in return, promised to bring in three hundred men. As for the Count, he feigned not to perceive the coldness of Stanislaus, and spoke to him with as much candor and good-humor as if nothing had occurred between them, and this both surprised and embarrassed Stanislaus, whose heart was, after all, strongly susceptible of kindness and generosity. Thrice happy had he been if he had not given the reins to his passions and his caprices. But unfortunately for himself he knew nothing of those internal struggles in which the soul wars against these vile passions and subduing them, obtains a more splendid victory than ever warrior gained.

He had resolved to be revenged, and if, in his calmer moments, he had rejected the first promptings of his wrath, it was because he had found that they would tarnish his honour, but the thirst for vengeance still remained unquenched.—Approaching Raphael, then, at the moment when the latter was putting his foot in the stirrup, he accosted him with a smile, and begged for a moment's conversation.—Raphael bowed assent, and they turned aside from the others, when, after having rode for some minutes without speaking, Stanislaus stopped, sprang to the ground, and requested Raphael to do the same, his whole countenance, as he spoke, undergoing a fearful change :

“ My lord,” said he, in a hurried tone, “ I have to demand of you an explanation, or rather satisfaction.”

“ You will perhaps have the goodness to inform me of the cause of this demand ?” said Raphael, who showed but little surprise, for he knew full well what it was that had excited Stanislaus to such a pitch.

“ The cause—the cause—” repeated Stanislaus, with considerable embarrassment, “ the cause is no trifling one, and I warn you beforehand that mere idle excuses will not satisfy me—blood alone can wipe out the injury I have received.”

“ Oh ! as to that, my dear Stanislaus,” replied Raphael, coolly, “ I have no intention of offering excuses where I am not aware of having

done wrong. As to our shedding each other's blood, I will tell you frankly what I think of it, when you have given me your reasons for this strange demand, as otherwise I shall leave you at once."

"Well," cried Stanislaus, disconcerted by the imperturbable calmness of his rival, "You need not pretend to be ignorant of the treatment I have received from the Count, nor of the indignity which has been offered me, for all which I hold you accountable, and demand from you that satisfaction which one man of honor seeks from another!"

"A man of honor (remember, I quote your own words as addressed to me on a former occasion) a man of honor is bound in duty to withdraw his claim when a decision has been made in favor of another!"

"Oh yes, you do well to mock me. But you will also please to remember that I then told you what were my claims and my expectations, yet you wilfully crossed my designs, and perfidiously destroyed my well-founded hopes, and I have, therefore, sworn—ay! sworn to be revenged!"

"So then," said Raphael, still maintaining his composure, "because you were pleased to cast your eyes on a young lady, you must needs have her, even against her own will and that of her father. And because I have had the good fortune to find favor in her sight, you would provoke me to deadly combat. From my



soul I pity you, Stanislaus, but I cannot nor will not accede to your wishes, for if passion carries your reason captive, I have not the same excuse, and would deem it worse than madness to accept your rash challenge. Moreover, religion as well as reason forbid these barbarous combats, so unworthy an enlightened age. And again—suppose you were to fall—how would that satisfy your revenge?”

“So you will not fight?” cried Stanislaus furiously, for in proportion as he felt his conduct contemptible and unreasonable, his wrath waxed higher and higher.

“No, Stanislaus! certainly not, and you might have known as much before.”

“But you shall—I will force you to it;” and snatching a pair of pistols from his holsters, he held one towards Raphael in a menacing manner—“Do not drive me to despair, I warn you,” he wildly exclaimed.

“Oh! if you wish to assassinate me, the case is different,” replied Raphael, with the utmost composure, “and I cannot prevent you.”

Stanislaus, in the midst of his fury, quailed before the intrepid look of his former friend, and as even a momentary pause showed him the magnitude and horror of the crime he was about to commit, he threw away the pistol, and dived into the thicket.

## CHAPTER VIII.

STANISLAUS had only walked a short distance through the forest when he saw Firley approaching, leading by the bridle his deserted steed.

"How happy I am to see your lordship again," cried the worthy steward, "for I feared that some accident had befallen you. I was surprised when I missed you from your usual post beside the Lady Rósa (who will soon be, I suppose, my honored mistress,) and could no way account for your absence when I came upon your horse, wandering through the copse, and your lordship may judge that I became dreadfully anxious. But will you please to mount?" added the faithful servant, as he remarked the increasing agitation of his master. Stanislaus made no reply, but flung himself into the saddle.

"And what frightened me still more," persisted Firley, "when I came to examine the saddle, I perceived that one of your pistols was gone. But very soon after I had made this alarming discovery the Count and your friend Ubinski passed quite near me, and I heard them repeat your name several times, and one of them spoke as though he had just left you. I then heard the Count say—'Oh! as to

that, Ubinski, I can answer for Stanislaus—at least, we are sure of his vassals, and that, you know, is the main thing.’ ”

Now there was not a word of truth in this very plausible story, but as he had followed his master step by step and saw all that had passed, he had built up a structure to suit his own purpose. His fabrication had, in the first place, effectually aroused Stanislaus from his stupor.

“ Ah! indeed! is it thus they use my name ?” cried he, with a strange smile, “ I am rejoiced to hear this, because if they wish to use me for their own private ends, I have just cause for breaking with them altogether. For you, Firley, you will ride forward to the castle, and draw thence all our people. I shall await you on the road, so make no delay as business of importance demands my presence at home.”

“ Oh, certainly my lord wishes to superintend in person the preparations for his marriage,” observed Firley, as though he understood not the drift of his master’s words.

“ Firley !” cried Stanislaus with sudden fury, “ if you ever repeat that word in my presence, you shall have cause to repent it—and, after all, what is it to me?—and I can now curse my own folly for having been so long devoted to one whom I now heartily despise. You must know, then, Firley, that the Count and his daughter have both rejected my offer.”

“ Rejected your offer !” repeated Firley, in

well feigned astonishment, although that worthy had already guessed how matters stood.

“Yes, rejected—and the preference given to *my friend* Raphael.”

“Well, my lord, I can only say that if I had not heard it from your own mouth I could never have believed it.”

“And yet, Firley, it is a hateful truth!”

“And after all my noble master is about to return home and collect his vassals that he may range them under the Count’s banner—for so I heard that nobleman say. I cannot but admire your magnanimity, though I must own I would never have given my master credit for such profound humility!”

“A truce to raillery, Firley! and help me to work out my revenge!”

“Oh! with all my heart!” returned the steward, with perfect sincerity. “And, indeed, I might have known that a nobleman of unblemished honor such as it is my pride to serve could never have pocketed an affront so gross. Then for your revenge, my good lord, why, it must be proportionate to the greivous wrong you have sustained—that is certain. Well I think the best thing your lordship can do is to abandon these wretches to themselves, and when left to their own paltry resources, you will soon see them bitterly deplore their treatment of you, and even sue with all humility for your forgiveness. Then you can give them contempt for contemot and treat them as they deserve!”



“And I assure you I will do it with right good will, but now it looks bad for me to give up the national cause for a private quarrel. I have unhappily made an engagement which, to break, would be dishonor.”

“And God forbid, my lord! that I should advise you to do anything against the dictates of your conscience; the truth is that I admire exceedingly the delicacy of your sentiments. But yet I must be permitted to remind you that you have your personal dignity to sustain, and that it, too, has its rights. If you do not wish to pronounce hastily, at least maintain towards those who have injured you a cold reserve, so that you will be free to act hereafter as your own honor and interest may require.”

“Yes! that is very nearly what I had thought of,” muttered Stanislaus, but half aloud.

Meanwhile, about three or four o'clock the faint wintry sun began to decline westward; the north wind piped shrilly amongst the tall and leafless trees, and the hunters widely scattered over the fields and roads thronged in to the merry sounds of the horn. Notwithstanding the fatigues of the day, and the sharp squalls of the frosty wind, they approached the castle with laugh and song, wearing more the aspect of a victorious army than a troop of huntsmen. Some were discussing the most striking incidents of the chase, others disputing on the skill and dexterity of those who had distinguished themselves in the course of the day; some were

playing lively airs on small trumpets fabricated of the bark of the birch tree, while others gaily fired at the numerous flocks of crows who, hovering around, contributed by their harsh croakings, to swell still louder the general uproar. On reaching the castle, another festival awaited the hunters, who took care to march in perfect order, and with a show of haughty defiance in front of the Russian soldiers, who stood under arms motionless as statues, and many a bitter jest and biting sarcasm was flung at them by the Poles as they passed. They then proceeded to take their places at the table which had long awaited their arrival; bottles flew merrily from hand to hand, and glasses were clinked together with hurras which awoke the slumbering echoes of the vaulted halls. Throughout that vast assemblage the most perfect harmony prevailed—masters for the time forgot their distinctive rights, and all were fellow-citizens and brethren. It was when these fraternal transports were at their height that the Count arose, and in a loud, clear voice, commanded silence, when, as if by enchantment, the clamor ceased, and gave place to a profound stillness.

“My friends!” cried the Count, “glorious news have reached us—Warsaw has driven forth the Russians, and all Poland is on fire. Our brethren have sworn to die or conquer the tyrant, and shall not we imitate—shall we not

aid them? Yes, Poland for ever, and death to the oppressor!"

As though it were an electric spark, this news set hearts and souls on fire, and roused them almost to delirium.—Rising with one accord, they embraced each other, laughing and weeping alternately, and wildly stamping their feet in unison, as the cry was echoed from mouth to mouth, "Poland—Poland for ever! Death and vengeance for the Russian tyrants!" But they stopped not there, for each man ran and snatched up his arms, and brandishing them aloft, they cried as with one voice that the Russians must be instantly expelled from the castle, "for Lithuania," said they, "must be free like Warsaw."

"All in good time," said the Count, "and there is no doubt but we shall do as our brethren of Warsaw have done. Follow me now, but be sure that no one strikes a blow until I give the signal. We are twenty to one, and it would throw foul dishonor on the national cause were we to shed the blood of a defenceless enemy."

Rushing then into the court-yard, with arms in hands they quickly surrounded the pavilion occupied by the Russians, before the latter had time to respond to the cry of their sentinels. Their chief was thrown completely off his guard, because having seen the Poles entirely given up (as he believed) to the pleasures of the table, he never dreamed of an attack from them. So it was that while one half of his men were

sleeping, the other half were quietly eating their supper.

"And now let me tell you that resistance is useless," said the Count, as he advanced alone into the Russian quarters, "and would but draw down destruction on your whole party. We have no desire to shed your blood, but we must and shall be masters on our own soil. You will then give up your arms to us, and having done so you may retire unmolested and go wherever you please."

The Russian officer still hesitated, but casting a glance behind him, he saw that the greater part of his men were far from being in readiness to support him, he was therefore compelled to yield.

"The duty of a soldier," said he, as though to excuse his submission, "The duty of a soldier is to die rather than yield, but when even his death can do no good, I think he may with honor capitulate."

The Count had at first resolved to keep this detachment as prisoners of war, but fearing that he might not be able to command the long pent-up wrath of his people, who might insist on sacrificing the Russians to their vengeance, he generously decided on dismissing them from the castle. Availing himself at once, then, of his influence over his friends, he prevailed upon them to consent to this capitulation. The Russians then, glad to escape with their lives, marched out with heads uncovered through the



stately ranks of their adversaries, and rapidly gained the open country.

"I am afraid," said one of the gentlemen who stood near the Count, "that this act of generosity may draw upon us a large reinforcement of the enemy; and that sooner than we think."

"And that very idea made me hesitate at first," said the Count, in reply, "but then again I quickly remembered that whether I retained these Russians or sent them away, there are sure to be spies somewhere about us, who will be only too glad to inform against us, and make a good job for themselves. And, moreover, a cause so just, so holy as ours must never be tarnished by cold-blooded cruelty. Now, gentlemen," went on the gallant old soldier, "we must strain every point in order to follow up as it should be done, this first act of independence. It behoves us, then, to separate for the present, but on the third day let us assemble here again, at the head of all our vassals. Once more I would remind you that it is idle to waste time so precious on trifling preparations; profit, on the contrary, by the enthusiasm first evoked,—bring hither all who are willing to follow your banners, for we have arms and ammunition for all. You will leave here with me as many of your men as you can spare, and I shall employ the time in drilling them, and in forming our battalions so as to be ready for the field as soon as you arrive with

the remainder of your forces. And so I will bid you adieu for the present, and may God bless your endeavors!"

The confederates then took leave of each other, promising faithfully to meet at the appointed time, sword in hand, ready for the battle, and on those conditions each set out for his own domains. As the evening was then far advanced, the Count applied himself, with the aid of Casimir and Raphael, to dispose of his numerous guests for the night. When all the inferior apartments of the castle had been filled, the neighboring farm-houses were put in requisition, and group after group wheeled away, saluting the Count, as they passed him, with patriotic exclamations, until all had sought their appointed lodgings, and silence reigned where all had so lately been tumult and uproar, no sound being heard save the measured step of the sentinels as they paced their prescribed bounds. . .

Then it was that the Count, Rosa, Casimir and Raphael drew their seats around the cheerful hearth to discuss the events of the day and the chances of the future, "All have done their duty," said the Count, "and I trust that even Stanislaus, though he left us so abruptly, will not disgrace his name when the day of trial comes. Notwithstanding his disappointment I think we may reckon on him."

"It matters not," said Casimir, "but for my part, I had no idea that he was so susceptible as this most ill-timed flight would prove him to

be. Do you know that all our friends who are acquainted with his rejection are convinced that he is at bottom a coward."

"Stanislaus is far too passionate to be a coward," said Raphael, "but I think it likely that the poor lad will endeavor to console himself for his disappointment by some new method."

"Do let us be charitable, friends mine," interposed Rosa, "and let us at least compassionate those who are unhappily governed by furious passions!" Just as she spoke, another individual joined the little circle, to their surprise as well as pleasure—it was the Abbe Choradzo.

"My dear friends," said the good priest smiling, "since my parishioners have all come hither to enrol themselves under your banners, I have come to offer my services should you require a chaplain."

"A thousand thanks, my dear, good friend," exclaimed the Count, warmly shaking the priest's hand, "for you are worth a whole battalion to us."

"My children," said the worthy vicar, "the counsels of peace would be now superfluous and out of place, and though my ministry is essentially one of peace, yet its functions change not their character when exercised amid the tumult of battle and the horrors of bloodshed. Wherever death is hovering in the air, there is the place for the priest of the Most High, whose

office it is to lead souls to God. My duties of prayer and charity may then be fulfilled in the midst of those stormy scenes which will soon burst on these devoted provinces. Besides, though a priest, I am yet a citizen of Poland, and an ardent upholder of her imperishable rights. As a priest, I would have sought to attain those rights by some other, and, it appeared to me, surer means, but you have decided otherwise—my country takes up arms to break the unjust and intolerable yoke which oppresses her, and I owe her my feeble support. Dispose, therefore, of all my little property, and do with it whatever you may deem best for the common good.”

“If God is for us who will be against us?” cried the Count with enthusiasm.

“Ah! be not deceived, my friend,” returned the priest quickly; “the just cause is not always successful, whether it be that means are often employed which God cannot sanction, or whether it be that by the failure of such causes as have right on their side, God himself proves to us the indispensable necessity of his rigorous judgments. Let us, however, place our whole trust in God, and whatever may be the issue of events, His almighty arm will never fail us. And now my dear Count, I must beg a bed in your fortress for to-night—it is time to seek that repose which wearied nature requires.”

The little party then separated, and promised to be up and stirring before the dawn, and



they kept their word. The fearful anxiety which all more or less felt, suffered none to enjoy very long the tranquil pleasure of sound sleep. As soon as the daylight appeared, the Count set out to examine in detail the ground around the castle so as to prepare his defences against a surprise. The castle itself was only open to a front attack, for in its rear lay, as we have said, the vast and impenetrable forest, but then the front was only defended by an old moat on which the ravages of time were every where visible, and the *facade* was of such a length as to require a numerous garrison, the more so as there was not a single piece of cannon.

"We can decide on nothing," observed the Count to Raphael and Casimir, who accompanied him, "until we have ascertained the exact number of our garrison. Let us go and see."

The court-yards were, even at that early hour, thronged with people, who were flocking in from all the surrounding country. But the multitude was composed, in a great measure, of women, children and old men. The Count commanded silence, and ordered all those who were fit to bear arms, to pass behind him; in a moment he was obeyed, and arms were distributed amongst these men, who numbered about two hundred men—Casimir immediately set about giving them what training the time would permit. The Count then conducted the immense crowd of those who were unfit for service to

the esplanade in front of the castle, and showed them how they could make themselves useful by fetching earth from the fields around to form an entrenchment on the line of the moat. Thereupon, the whole multitude of old men, women and children, set eagerly about their work, and as they numbered altogether no less than seven or eight hundred, and worked with right good will, the work sped bravely on, and by evening of that same day, the entrenchment assumed an imposing aspect. At that time the castle began really to look like war—hour after hour witnessed arrivals of arms, provisions, and volunteers, and every where was seen the most cheering good humor and even joy. Within the castle Rosa was not idle; calm and serene in the midst of confusion and uproar, she occupied herself, with the assistance of the priest, in preparing bandages and medicaments for those who might be wounded in the conflict.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when a considerable body of Russian troops was seen advancing towards the castle.

## CHAPTER IX.

ALTHOUGH the Count affected to make light of this sudden appearance of the Russians, yet, in reality, it gave him the most serious uneasiness; in the first place, he was far from being ready to receive them, and in the next it was more than probable that the presence of such a force in the neighborhood would paralyse the energies of his friends, and deter many from coming forward. He at once resolved to judge for himself as to the actual number of the enemy, and requesting Raphael to accompany him, he set out, followed at a short distance by some of his people. Having crossed the narrow river which formed the boundary of the esplanade, they turned to the right, in the direction of Grodno, and had not journeyed far, when, by the last glimmering light of day, they saw all too plainly a glittering forest of Russian bayonets covering the road far and near. The column, it appeared, had halted, and the officers, standing together at a short distance, seemed consulting on what next was to be done.

“There are not less than seven or eight hundred men there,” observed the Count; “what a misfortune it is that we have not had two days more to prepare—were but our forces gathered together we could easily manage this

division, and then the advantage of obtaining the first victory would have been an incalculable one to us, as it would awake the enthusiastic hopes of the people?

"I perceive they have three or four pieces of cannon, too," said Raphael, pointing them out to the Count.

"So much the worse for our chance of maintaining our position," replied the Count, with a dejected air. But let us not forget ourselves here, for we have not a moment to lose. It will be an hour yet before the enemy can reach the castle, and as it will then be pitch dark, he must suspend his operations till the morrow, so that we have still from twelve to fifteen hours to urge on our defences. If we then find them of reasonable strength, we may try a forlorn hope, and if we are too weak to attack these Russians, as I much fear we shall be, our remaining here as long we can may give our friends time to rejoin us. Truly, I am at a loss to know how it is that these Russians have got here so quickly, for the prisoners whom we liberated could not even yet have reached Grodno, much less to be back again with reinforcements. To what, then, are we to attribute this unlooked-for apparition? It is a mystery to me!"

Yet, unaccountable as it seemed to the Count, the matter is plain enough, for this sudden appearance of the Russians was the natural consequence of the note addressed by Firley to the Russian officer. The latter had instantly sent



off an express requesting a reinforcement, and next day when he was on his march to Grodno with his men, he had fallen in with these troops who, in compliance with his desire, had been sent on by forced marches. But the reinforcements consisted of not more than a hundred men, and the face of things had changed completely since he had sent for them—it was then the object to arrest a criminal, but now a revolution had commenced, and must be put down at all hazards. The two detachments, then, had stopped to await the arrival of a still larger force, for which they had sent back to Grodno. And so it was that the Russians had baffled the Count's foresight by appearing before his castle two days sooner than he had expected.

"My dear Raphael," said the Count, as they speedily retraced their steps towards the castle, "I have not attempted to conceal from you the imminence of our danger; and you see, therefore, that everything depends on keeping up the courage of our little garrison, and if possible redoubling their enthusiasm, since our only chance rests on one bold stroke. Were it not for the artillery, I should not fear so much, but its effects are terrible on raw, undisciplined men."

"Well! at worst we can do as the Vendeans did in their unequal struggles against the French republic," responded Raphael, gaily. "We can kneel before the cannons, so that the balls will

pass over head, and then rush on the cannoniers!"

"Why, Raphael, it is the suggestion of an old soldier. You must always have had a hankering after our trade, notwithstanding your late condemnation of our policy.—You cannot have forgotten, either, that some years ago, you were among the most sanguine of my young friends, and I suppose nature ever comes uppermost, do what we will, as a buoy floats on the water!"

"Under one form or another," answered Raphael, "my first thought has ever been that of devoting myself to my country, and I shrink not from shedding my blood for her since she requires it at my hands."

"Ah! would that all our confederates resembled you, my friend, for then I should have no fears—success would then, indeed, crown our efforts." Here they arrived at the esplanade, where they found the rustic garrison all assembled.

"My friends!" said the Count, as he alighted from his horse, "my friends, the Russians are near, but before they can undertake anything against us we shall far outnumber them, and my only fear is that our friends, surrounding them on all sides, may deprive us of the honor of the victory!"

"Let us go now, then—lead us on at once to meet them!" was heard on all sides, and so great appeared the enthusiasm of the people, that the Count was reassured.

“Not so!” said the Count, in a tone of command, “you shall not march hence till the fitting time is come. Remember that you are soldiers, and must be perfectly obedient to your officers. This night I expect numerous reinforcements, and till they arrive we must do nothing, for we know that our friends would wish to have a share in the glory of the first victory, so let us do as we would be done by. Have your arms in perfect readiness, and leave the rest to us.”

Having thus guarded against the effect of the sudden appearance of the enemy, the Count applied himself to increase the strength of his defences by all possible means. He ordered large fires to be kindled all along the esplanade, in order to give the appearance of a numerous encampment, and then hurried on the forming of the entrenchments which were to screen his people from the cannonading. He next proceeded to the river, which must necessarily be crossed in order to reach the castle, and saw that the wooden bridge which stretched across it was cut away. Thus he hoped to delay the attack, by obliging the Russians to erect a bridge before they could cross. Having by this manœuvre gained a few hours more, he sent out scouts to raise the country and others to watch the enemy, and then entered the castle with Raphael and Casimir. They were met at the gate by Rosa and the vicar, who were anxious to learn the news.

“There will be nothing serious before to-

morrow," said the Count, in answer to their inquiries; "but we have great need to profit by the intervening hours. Even you can give us effectual aid, as it is absolutely necessary to write immediately and send off an express to each of our friends, urging them to come hither before the dawn with whatever force they may have in readiness. You will then be my secretaries on this occasion."

The Count then wrote a letter which was copied about twenty times and with as many different addresses, and the messengers were instantly despatched with orders to ride as though for life or death, and to return as quickly as they went.

"Are you then afraid of being forced in your entrenchments?" inquired the Abbe, when the last letter had been sealed and sent off.

"If we have not here before eight o'clock to-morrow a thousand men at arms," replied the Count, endeavoring to appear calm, "we shall be obliged to take refuge in the woods, as otherwise it would be madness to attempt holding out. I would rather, too, march away of our own accord than expose my small band to a contest so unequal, and sure to end in a defeat which would go far to discourage our friends. I cannot believe, however, that we shall be left to ourselves, for though our rendezvous was fixed for the third day, yet I am sure that no time was lost in setting about the preparations, and as our messengers have been sent



around to-day, we have every reason to hope that we shall have reinforcements to-night or early to-morrow. My dear Rosa!" he added, turning to his daughter, "as we are on the very eve of a bloody engagement, we should endeavor to prepare ourselves by needful rest, so go to your chamber, my daughter, and try to obtain a few hours' sleep, whilst yet you may."

"Many thanks, my dear, kind father! but if I left you I should be harrassed with a thousand fears—near you I am always courageous; and, moreover, under existing circumstances, I am sure I could not sleep. And, you know, or must know, that I consider myself as one of your council of war, which, if I mistake not, is now sitting, and therefore how can I retire?" And Rosa smiled sadly as she spoke.

The Count insisted no more, for he well knew the courage and firmness of his daughter, and that she could really bear up against fatigue in a manner little usual with her sex. The conversation was then resumed, and the tedious hours of suspense were beguiled by the various calculations and suppositions as to the probable amount of the expected succour. The first courier who arrived brought the reply of Stanislaus Dewello, stating that as the grand meeting had been fixed for the third day, he conceived that the Count had no power to call in the levies sooner; that for his part he would be guided by circumstances, and held himself

responsible to no individual; he was perfectly independent, and intended to remain so.

"The wretch! he dishonors himself!" cried the Count, warmly. "No, I do not, could not, believe that his pride and jealousy would carry him so far as this, and I will own that I did calculate on his support."

"Be not surprised at this dereliction, my dear Count," said the vicar, "for where the passions are permitted to rule, there has honor, no fixed tenure."

Raphael then recounted what had passed between Stanislaus and himself, at their last meeting, of which he had not before spoken to any one. "From that moment," he concluded, "I saw that his furious and vindictive jealousy might well end in treason to the cause."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Rosa, much agitated by this recital, we could never sufficiently despise such baseness, did we not rather incline to pity it. But how nobly you acted, Raphael!" she suddenly added, as she turned her moistened eyes on her lover, "and I tremble when I think of the danger to which you were thus exposed."

"Let us forget this worthless young man!" exclaimed the Count, "for he was not worthy to serve in the ranks of his country's defenders, and this very circumstance should convince us that only the pure of heart will be admitted as champions of the righteous cause. Thus may all withdraw themselves from us whose hearts and souls are filled with the impure leaven of

earthly and selfish motives, for though our numbers may be in that case grievously thinned, we may be better prepared for victory, and more likely to obtain it."

"Did not the little band of the Maccabees wrest the independence of their country from all the armies of the tyrants?" said the Abbe, with solemnity. "And history everywhere shows us that **mighty** hosts may be defeated by a few heroic spirits for whom death is preferable to slavery or dishonor." Almost while these words were being spoken another messenger arrived, and was speedily followed by another and another.

"Let us see the news which these men bring us," said the Count as he approached the several couriers with an air of forced gaiety. But the answers were nearly all of a similar nature; all professed themselves taken by surprise. Some found it quite impossible to have their people ready at so short a notice, and could bring little more than a few faithful servants; while others (and they were the larger number) could not think of doing anything against so large a force, and were completely taken aback by the presence of the Russians. Surprised at the very opening of their preparations, they had concealed their arms, and put a stop to the proceedings until better days should come. The Count was entirely overpowered by these cheerless announcements; all his brilliant hopes were then blighted in the bud; Lithuania madly re-

jected a most glorious opportunity; Warsaw in vain expected their aid, and must lose, through their miserable cowardice and fatuity, the fruit of her own magnanimous efforts; the iron of slavery was to be driven still deeper into their souls; while himself must sink ingloriously to the tomb without having seen the light of freedom dawn on his country. These bitter thoughts sank deep, deep into the heart of the veteran, and he could scarcely support their accumulated weight. But then he remembered the heavy responsibility which rested upon him, and he endeavored to rally his flagging spirits.

"It is well;" said he, addressing his ambassadors, who remained standing before him, covered with dust and perspiration, "go and take some repose, for we shall soon find ourselves face to face with the enemy."

"What do you propose doing, father?" demanded Casimir, when they were alone.

"In truth, my son, I scarcely know," returned his father, dejectedly. "Before I take any decisive step, I shall wait another hour for the arrival of those who really intend to join us. We shall then see what is to be done."

Alas! hour after hour passed away, and only five or six gentlemen arrived, with about fifty of their followers—all daring and resolved, it is true, but then how insignificant in number. A council was then held, and after all the probabilities had been fully discussed, it was resolved to make a retreat, and escape the vengeance of



the Russians by seeking an asylum amid the inaccessible forests of the neighborhood. There at least they would be free to consult on what was best to do, and issue from those wild fastnesses at will to make a bold stroke for freedom and Poland. It was, moreover, necessary to have a rallying point whither the friends of nationality might gather from all parts of the province. The Count, therefore, with admirable composure, gave orders for the evacuation of the castle; he saw that the horses were loaded with all sorts of provisions and ammunition; distributed the most valuable furniture and ornaments amongst the neighboring farmers, who eagerly promised to preserve them for him till happier times; the greater part of his papers he committed to the flames, and then summoning his domestics to his presence, as also the peasantry who had come in on the evening before, he announced that all who feared the opening campaign and its hardships, might retire to their homes. But they answered with one accord, that wherever he went they would follow, and there was no mistaking their sincerity.

“My friends!” said the Count, with deep emotion, “we shall see brighter days—yes, your heroic devotion assures me of it. Let us persevere, my brethren, until we have tired out our ill luck, and then we shall have a change.”

With the activity of a man well accustomed to military operations, he then proceeded to divide his little band into two detachments, one

of which he sent forward with the baggage, while the other was kept to cover the retreat. He then entered the castle, where he found the women and children overpowered with terror—tears, and cries, and groans being heard on every side. At first nothing would satisfy them but to carry off everything, when, having been shown that this was impracticable, they were sorely puzzled to make choice of what they could carry. What was to be taken?—what was to be left?—those were the grand questions. Then they picked up, in their eagerness, so many things, that they were obliged to drop some, and their piteous cries resounded far and wide. It was then, “Listen! I declare, the enemy is at the gates!”—“Oh! we are lost, we are lost!”—“But what reddish light is that?—Fire!—Fire!” whereupon women and children rushed pell-mell through the halls and galleries; in vain did the Count seek to re-assure the unhappy creatures, for, maddened by contagious fear, they rushed wildly on, with the strangest and most ludicrous gesticulations. The Count, in the meantime, passed on to where his children were grouped together.

“All is now ready,” said he, “and we have only to take our place at the head of our brave people. One precaution alone remains, and it is an indispensable one as matters now stand. I have been for a considerable time hoarding up large sums, wherewith to bear my share of the expenses of the revolution. This wealth con-

sists chiefly of title deeds and jewels, which we can easily secrete about our persons. I have divided it into three equal portions, of which you, Raphael, will take one, as my daughter's marriage portion, while Casimir and I will take charge of the other two. Thus, if we are separated, each will still be in possession of funds, which will, above all, be devoted to the furtherance of the great cause in which we are embarked. I know that I have no need to recommend Rosa to your tenderest care—bound to her as we all three are, she cannot want a protector should either of us fall. And now for the last consultation—shall we put fire to the castle before we go, that the Russians may find but a heap of ashes?"

"I say, yes!" said Casimir, eagerly, "let them not desecrate our old halls by their accursed presence."

"Do no such thing, I entreat you!" exclaimed Raphael with equal earnestness—"destroy not yourselves this noble pile, which may one day assume all its ancient splendour in your hands, should victory be indeed ours. Besides to burn it would give the signal for a war of extermination."

"Farewell, then, home of my fathers!" cried the Count with tearful eyes, "I leave you now in sorrow and in gloom, but oh! may these dear children one day return and find shelter within your venerated walls!"

## CHAPTER X.

It was about six o'clock on the following morning when the Count ordered the retreat of the last division of his little garrison. Before they set out, he caused them to light up again the line of fires on the esplanade, so as to make the Russians believe that the castle was still occupied, for the shades of night still enveloped the scene, and precluded any close inspection. There was every hope that the Polish garrison might reach in safety the shelter of the forests, for independent of the all but impossibility of overtaking a retreating force which is determined not to fight, the Poles, being on their native ground, could choose a position which would enable them to resist the attack of even a much larger body than that with which they had to deal. After some time the Count and his party came up to their advanced guard, and they all marched on together for some hours in the direction of Grodno, from which they were but ten or twelve leagues distant, but the inequality of the ground rendered the journey much more tedious. At the first halt, which took place at eleven o'clock, the Count was informed the Russians had entered the castle, but manifested no intention of following the fugi-



tives towards the woods. On the contrary they seemed determined to make the castle their head-quarters, whence they might watch and command the surrounding country.

"Since they do not think of pursuing us," said the Count to his friends, "we may as well make an encampment here in the woods. I am not without hopes that we shall soon be sufficiently numerous to march forth with floating banners, but if, contrary to my hopes and expectations, we are not speedily reinforced, then each will be at liberty to return home, or if he likes it better, he may try to make his way through the Russian lines to our gallant brethren of Warsaw."

They then set about making their encampment; the Count, his family, and the few gentlemen who had followed his fortunes, took up their abode in the hut of a forester, while the mass of the troop, consisting entirely of peasants who were well inured to hardship, hastily threw up some sheds formed of the branches of trees, which they covered with clay, so as to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather. Day after day emissaries were despatched through all the country round, with the hope of obtaining reinforcements, but at evening they returned wearied and exhausted, bringing ever the same discouraging answers; as usual, the Russian authorities were ever on the watch and left no means untried that might break down the patriotic spirit of the people.

The insurrection of Warsaw was now known throughout all the provinces which had formed the kingdom of Poland, and the intelligence was everywhere greeted with stern and threatening exultation. From Ukraine to Courland the dismembered and fettered nation seemed but to await the signal to start up in arms. The Russian government, however, had resolved not to be again taken by surprise, and commenced its new series of operations by forcing under its banners almost every Pole who could carry arms, and this in order to draw off the strength of that portion of ancient Poland which though nominally subject to the Czar, seemed ever willing to seize the opportunity to weaken and even cast off his yoke. All Lithuanian officers suspected of patriotism were removed into Russian regiments, so that, having under their thumb all those who might have acted as leaders of the rebellion, it became easy to control the people, deprived of those who would concert and arrange their plans. The police, too, redoubled its activity and watchfulness; in virtue of a general ukase the gymnasiums were thrown open; while the frequent denunciations and investigations which took place struck terror to every heart. Every remnant of ancient franchise was revoked; new imposts were added to the accustomed taxes; martial law was proclaimed and the people were only too well pleased to get rid of their arms by giving them up.

So it was that the utter desertion of which Count Bialewski had to complain, was but too well excused by these terrible proceedings of the government. When after having waited three whole weeks, he saw that he had nothing to depend on but the handful of brave men by whom he was surrounded, he was forced to acknowledge that he had been too precipitate, and that the nation was not yet prepared for a simultaneous movement. Yet painful as was this conviction, it had not power to discourage him, for he was one of those men who are fired by the presence of danger, and who, once entered on a perilous career, must go on—on either to death or victory. Constrained to abandon for the present the war of arms, he turned his attention to the other means which might be tried to promote the ultimate success of the cause. Even this task was one of exceeding danger at a time when the fear of the Russian government weighed like a mill-stone on men's minds, but the Count shrank not from the danger, nor feared to surmount the obstacles.

“We must not be discouraged,” he observed, “notwithstanding these grievous disappointments. It is hard, I will own, to forgive the criminal weakness, which has left us thus deserted, but we know that it is not the heart which is at fault, it is only that our people are terrified by the dreadful state of the country. We are then bound to overlook their falling away, and must only endeavour to reanimate

their broken spirits and incite them to make an unanimous effort. And now we must separate, placing our swords in our scabbards until we can use them with profit to our country. You know that our victorious brethren declared their intention of taking refuge in Lithuania, let us then be prepared to receive them as brothers, and to aid them in their gallant struggles for liberty."

These words were heard in mournful silence, for, notwithstanding all the hardships of the season, and of their unsheltered state, that sturdy band of patriots could not brook the thought of laying down their arms. "Yet, it must be done, my brave and worthy friends," said the Count, kindly, but console yourselves with the thought that I give you but a temporary dismissal. In the meantime you will do all you can to hasten the moment when we shall meet again under the waving flag of Poland. First of all, you will spread the report, when you reach your homes, that I have gone into Poland proper, in order to reach Warsaw, if possible. This false report will abate the ardor of pursuit, and will thus give me time and opportunity to work out my views for our common deliverance from slavery."

As each in his own heart was convinced that at present their remaining together was worse than useless, they at length consented to depart, and taking leave of the Count and his family, with the greatest respect, they disposed them-



selves in small knots, so as to elude suspicion in returning to their deserted homesteads. The Count was thus left alone with his children (of whom Raphael was of course one) and a few faithful vassals of his house. Many of the worthy peasants, however, had voluntarily promised to bring constant intelligence as to the movements of the enemy. The forester, in whose house the Count and his family were lodged, was an old soldier, who had served under the Count in many a campaign, and who would have been willing, at any moment, to lay down his life for his former captain, and this devoted follower made it his chief study to supply the family with the choicest game, and also to carry on the communication with the various agents of the Count. Whilst awaiting the time, then, whence the false rumor of his flight should have lulled, the Russians, into forgetfulness of him, the Count busied himself in making arrangements for a campaign, not military, but diplomatic.

“The extreme severity with which the Russians have crushed this revolt,” said he, will certainly produce a speedy re-action, which it is for us to anticipate by representing to our friends that they have nothing to lose, and much to gain, by having recourse to arms. Ground down, as we are, beneath the iron despotism of Russia, a single victory might bring us some relief. Nevertheless, I am well aware of the discouragement arising from the late fruitless

attempt which our enemies have not failed to turn into ridicule. This, then, imposes on us the necessity of developing our plans, and enlarging the basis of our operations, so that by the multiplicity of our efforts we may disconcert the enemy and give confidence to our friends. I am now about to lay before you my new projects, and request your candid opinion of their merits.— One of us must go immediately to Grodno and to Wilna, in order to confer with the committee already organised in each of these important cities, in order to ascertain their probable resources, and still more how they stand towards the national cause; then after learning their decision as to the proper time for taking up arms, the delegate must go on into Samogitia, where he will be sure to find the truest sympathy and a cordial welcome. If you had no objection, my dear Raphael, to such a mission I should be most happy to entrust it to your prudence and good sense.”

“I gladly accept the mission,” replied Raphael. The Count, having completed his arrangements, Raphael started on his important errand. On his arrival near Grodno he discovered a numerous encampment close without the walls. The fact was that the authorities having by some means obtained a knowledge of Count Bialewski’s plans, and understanding that the first attack was to be made on Grodno, had concentrated to that point all the disposable forces within a circle of twenty-five leagues. Raphael

saw at a glance that it would, therefore, be as useless as it was perilous to endeavor to open a communication with the Poles in the city, for even should he succeed in making his way within the walls, what effect would his representations have on a people so subdued and spiritless, kept down by such an army as lay within and around their city? Without losing any more time in hesitation, he at once resolved to set out for Wilna, which lay about thirty leagues distant. As no recent attempt had been made, and that Wilna was far removed from the neighborhood of Count Bialewski's domains, which at that moment attracted all the attention of the government, Raphael had hopes that he could there obtain admission and be enabled to confer with the national committee. These calculations encouraged him to proceed, and at the end of two or three days he found himself on the heights which overlook Wilna. But now, how to get through the gates, for, if he announced himself as a traveller, he should necessarily undergo a rigorous examination which was almost sure to end in his sudden execution.

"If I could only inform some one of our friends in the city that I am here," said Raphael to his guide, "I am sure they would find means to elude the vigilance of the police, or come here and meet me where I am."

"If that be all, my lord," said the guide, "I can manage it easily. You see those carts laden with grain and provisions which are going to-

wards the city? — well! I can easily follow them, and by scraping up an acquaintance with their drivers, I can pass for a peasant of this neighbourhood, and go in without the smallest trouble.— Only give me your instructions and the proper address of your friend or friends, so that I may not excite curiosity by my wandering about making inquiries, and leave the rest to me.”

“I thank you, my worthy fellow!” said Raphael, “your idea is excellent, and we cannot do better than put it at once into execution.”

Raphael was well acquainted with every locality in Wilna for he had studied several years in the University there, and he gave his guide the most minute directions how to find the house of a famous lawyer named Sapielna. He then repeated to him several times what he wished him to say to the advocate for he dared not give him a letter lest it might compromise his safety if, unluckily, he was stopped by the police. The guide, who was a shrewd, intelligent man, having received his instructions, set out with a light heart, and as light a step, for the city. His plan succeeded to admiration, he being taken, as he had expected, for a peasant going in with one of the market carts, and he reached without any accident the house of the lawyer, with whom he demanded to speak in a great hurry as if he had some important law-suit to lay before him. Being introduced to the presence of the advocate, and having ascertained



that they were alone together, he proceeded to open his negotiation, or at least to deliver his message, whereupon the man of law appeared very much embarrassed, and, to say truly, more than a little frightened. it was truly a most imprudent attempt; the police being so very much on the alert that there was no possibility of concealing anything from them—and then, a man once suspected, was a dead man. Moreover, to attempt any sort of insurrection at such a time, was really calculated to ruin the cause—beyond a doubt it was.

“And now my good friend! what do you want me to do?—I say, what would you have me do?” demanded Mr. Sapichna, in a tremulous agitation which spoke but meanly for his courage.

“In the first place, sir,” returned the guide coolly, “I would have you extricate my master from his perilous condition, and then you will find him a gallant young nobleman able and willing to explain the whole matter which a poor, ignorant man like me is not fit to do.”

The look which accompanied these words made the lawyer blush, and recalled to his mind the necessity of keeping up that character for patriotism which he had obtained by his fiery harangues in the national committee. He forthwith launched out into a long harangue, proving himself an uncompromising patriot, and wound up by saying that he would go at once and confer with some patriotic friends, and return as

soon as possible with their joint resolutions. Before he set out he left orders that the messenger should be well entertained. The truth was that Mr. Sapiehna was at bottom a true patriot, and had long served his country to the best of his ability by his eloquence at the bar. In defending the political offences of the time he shrank not from denouncing openly the barbarous policy of Russia, and so far he was worthy of all praise; but when the question turned on an appeal to arms, it must be acknowledged that worthy Master Sapiehna was troubled with the besetting weakness of Demosthenes. His intentions were good, notwithstanding, and he failed not to go in search of a certain member of the committee, a Doctor Neroski, who was well known to be of a determined and energetic character, and to him he communicated the nature of his embarrassment. The doctor at once decided that Count Bialewski's agent must be admitted, no matter at what risk to themselves, whereupon many plans were proposed and rejected as impracticable, when, at length, the intrepid Neroski hit upon a bright expedient.

"I shall ride out," he said, "in my gig, as though to visit a patient in the country, and I shall take with me one of my students, who often accompanies me on my professional visits. I can then go to the place where this young nobleman is staying, and can leave my young man in his place while I take him back in my

gig, and when once we have him in the city, the devil is in it, or we can manage to conceal him.

Sapiehna the more readily approved of this project, as he had nothing to do in it, and a few hours after he learned from Raphael himself that it had succeeded as well as heart could wish.

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## CHAPTER XI.

BUT being in Wilna was not the whole, for to act there to any advantage required the utmost precaution and the most unceasing watchfulness, together with considerable loss of time. The meetings of the national committee were extremely rare, as its members very naturally feared to draw down upon them the attention of a government whose punishments were as severe as its power was unlimited by law or equity. For this reason it became next to impossible to effect a general assembly. At one time a meeting on which great expectations had been founded was suddenly countermanded, because a new proclamation just then appeared, threatening with banishment to Siberia all who were found engaged in any secret confederation; sometimes they were not sufficiently numerous to venture upon any decisive resolution, at other times, their correspondence was inter-

cepted, so that there was always some fatal drawback. At length the more active members did succeed in bringing together the requisite number, but the time of meeting passed away in idle discussions, and produced no good. The committee was divided into several parties, all violently opposed to each other, and bent rather on carrying out their own peculiar views than advancing the general good. Raphael had thus passed two whole months in the capital of Lithuania, without having been able to obtain any satisfactory result; and yet he had done everything that man could do, under the circumstances, being fully aware of the vast importance of bringing so considerable a city as Wilna to some public manifestation. And nothing would have been easier (had the leaders been unanimous and energetic,) with the whole vast population ready and willing to cast off the Russian yoke, and having a nucleus of fiery energy, and devoted patriotism, in the students of the University, who desired nothing more, as they afterwards proved, than to fight and to die for their country. And when Raphael saw all this, he failed not to speak his mind to his friends of the committee.

“It is your irresolution,” said he to Sapiehna, “that hangs like a clog on the movements of the people; and your excessive caution it is which freezes up the lifesprings of patriotism. In the University—in the streets, impatience of restraint is visible on every face—every-



where you are asked secretly for arms, and yet you coldly answer, 'Wait a little—wait a little—be prudent and all will go well!'"

The lawyer was not slow in replying, and sought for the hundredth time to convince Raphael that the city could do nothing until the surrounding country had risen. "Consider," said he, and not without reason, "that all the forces of the district are concentrated within our walls, and that to enable us to act efficiently, a diversion must actually be made without, in order to draw off some of the garrison."

"Well, then, my dear friend! I have nothing further to do amongst you, and as my protracted stay here could do no possible good, I must move on into Samogitia, where by all accounts, we learn that the work goes bravely on, and there I may and can be of some service. And perhaps we may pay you a neighbourly visit some of these days, when we shall appear before your walls with the signal of independence!"

"Surely you will not think of leaving us?" cried the worthy advocate warmly, though in his heart he rejoiced in the anticipation of being released from his importunities—"why, the truth is, your presence is so useful to us here that we can do nothing without you. And besides, how can we reconcile ourselves to your setting out alone on such a journey, where the roads are everywhere scattered with Russian soldiers? No, my young friend! have a little

more patience—only wait a short time, and you will see what we can do.”

“This poor, pitiful language, which brought no blush to the face of the patriot-lawyer, so entirely was he governed by his fears, was just what was wanting to determine Raphael; and he lost no time in quitting the city, which he effected by the aid of his good friend, Neroski, who gave vent to many a curse against the cowardly vacillation of his brethren of the committee. Followed always by his Lithuanian guide, Raphael plunged into Samogitia, a province of ancient Poland, situated to the north of Russia, and bordering on Lithuania. This region, being thickly interspersed with immense forests and lofty mountains, was admirably adapted for a struggle with the foreign enemy; and whether it was that this circumstance had inspired the natives with greater courage, or that the discontent was still more deep and more general, it is certain that Raphael found everywhere as he passed along, all the elements of a vigorous insurrection. A number of the peasantry, in order to escape being pressed into the imperial service, had elected a chief, and taken up arms, but on being pursued by the Russian brigade, they had fled into the forest. Here, then, there was no difficulty in raising the people; one of the principal men of Rosienia, (the chief town of Samogitia,) who was foremost in welcoming the envoy of Count Biulewski, had already made large purchases of

arms and ammunition. The peasants and the domestics of the castles had been armed with scythes, sickles, and axes, while the stables of the nobility and gentry were thrown open to any one who could manage a horse. There being a total want of artillery, they had contrived a species of cannon, made of the trunk of a tree, hollowed out, and bound with massive bands of iron, and these they mounted on wheels and axles of coaches.

On the 25th of March, the first attack was made; the Samogitian bands disarmed the Russian guards of the canal of Windawa; on the following day the garrison of Rosienia was expelled, and then the people for miles around rose up in open insurrection. Yet the first regular battle attempted by the leaders of the people was anything but fortunate in its results, for the raw, undisciplined forces which they commanded were unable to resist the steady and murderous fire kept up by two thousand well-disciplined soldiers, and the consequence was that they fled in all directions. Not that they were discouraged, but they turned to what they were best fit for,—guerilla warfare, by which they hoped to harrass and exhaust their enemies while profiting by the peculiar features of their country. And in fact, in a very short time after this defeat, these hardy warriors did obtain a brilliant victory, having driven a Russian colonel with his regiment to take shelter in the Russian

territory; and they also took possession of the little port of Pologa, by means of which they hoped to receive those supplies of arms and ammunition of which they stood in need.

But in order to follow up this spirited attempt of the Samogitians, it was absolutely necessary that a similar effort should be made in Lithuania, and to attain that object Raphael bent all his energies. The inhabitants of the district of Troki gave the example by seizing their chief town, and subsequently, when emboldened by increased strength they took possession of Oszmiana and Wilkomierz, whereupon trampling on all that dared to oppose them, they boldly marched on Wilna to aid its inhabitants in their struggle. But alas! these latter, still paralysed by terror, dared not support this generous effort, for the Russian authorities had emphatically declared that on the first appearance of insurrection within the walls, they would withdraw the garrison, and open a cannonade on the city. Meanwhile the insurrection spread far and wide through Lithuania, and might have been attended with greater success had there been a centre of unity, or any concentration of strength. But there was no systematic mode of action, nothing done in concert.—Thus it was that every little town, nay, village, was the head-quarters of a petty revolution having its own chief, its own army, and in truth, struggling manfully with the foe; and thus it was that the Russians were everywhere attacked, harrassed, but rarely



defeated, thanks to their strong and perfect discipline; yet they were made to suffer very severely, and to see their ranks day after day becoming thinner. Just then it was, too, that the cholera, that terrible epidemic appeared amongst the troops, and aided the vengeful arms of the long-oppressed Poles. Raphael, seeing that the end of his mission was fully accomplished, thought seriously of rejoining the Count, from whom, to his grievous anxiety, he had received no tidings since his departure. Passing quickly through Lithuania, and avoiding the vicinity of the towns wherein the Russians had concentrated their forces, he soon reached the boundary of his own domains, and resolved to pay a passing visit to his venerable parent. His own castle was but five or six leagues from that of the Count, and here, as everywhere else, he found the people all armed and divided into battalions, as his vassals well knew that such was the wish of their absent lord. Raphael's grand-mother had not quitted her castle, and had moreover, retained around her only her women and a few faithful servants, having sent all her people to enrol themselves under the national flag. This venerable lady was, as we have before said, a model of every feminine virtue. In her devotion to the cause of freedom she had actually given up everything that she could spare that might be at all useful to the patriot army. All her plate, her household linen, and the grain from her granaries she

had sent to the depot, without even being asked to do so.

“My dear mother!” said Raphael, when, after having told her all that he dared not trust to paper, he was about to set out once again, “My dear mother, you are very lonely here, and I am somehow more fearful than ever to leave you so unprotected. Should the Russians appear in your neighborhood, you have everything to fear from their implacable animosity.”

“My son,” replied the heroic old lady, “I have made up my mind to die under my father’s roof-tree, and nothing can alter my purpose. Moreover, even if the Russians do come, I would fain hope that my hoary locks will be a sufficient safe-guard. But whether or not, I have only death to fear from them, and I trust that God will give me fortitude to bear what torments soever they may be tempted to inflict upon me. Go, then, my child! where duty calls you—to stay here on my account would be utterly useless, but for our country you can do something—go, then, in God’s name!”

“Oh my mother!” exclaimed Raphael in an agitated voice, when, having kissed the venerable brow of his aged relative, he bent his knee before her, “oh my mother! bless me before I go, and pray that I may inherit your lofty and unwavering virtue!”

Placing her hand on Raphael’s head, his grand-mother raised her eyes to heaven and fervently pronounced her blessing, then; desir-

ing him to rise she calmly received and returned his "farewell," and saw him depart without one symptom of weakness of age. Raphael took his place at the head of his armed vassals, and set out at a rapid pace for Count Bialewski's castle, around which he was informed that the insurrection was going on briskly. The gallant old nobleman had retaken possession of his dwelling by main force, and it was now the head-quarters of the national forces for many miles around. Impatient to see once more those whom he loved so much and from whom he had been so long separated, Raphael travelled at a rapid pace. As he approached the immediate vicinity of the castle everything began to wear a look of life and animation—there were bands of the Count's soldiers passing to and fro singing snatches of patriotic songs; caravans of horses and carts bearing provisions and arms; on the heights were seen sentinels and advanced posts; in the hamlets there were recruits going through their exercise; while at intervals was heard the firing of musketry announcing that insurgents were engaged in a skirmish with the Russians. In the midst of this universal excitement Raphael enters the courtyard, where he left his people while he went to seek the Count. A few moments and he was pressed to the Count's heart, and greeted by him as a long-absent son.

"Yes, my dear Raphael," pursued he, "our joy is great, for we were fearfully alarmed on

your account, having heard no tidings of you since you left us, and our anxiety would have been still greater had we not consoled ourselves by the thought that the Russians might have intercepted your letters, so that you might after all, be still alive. But, thanks to the protecting power of God, you are come back, and just at the same time as Casimir, from whom, I suppose, you have heard on your journey hither."

"I have not seen him," said Raphael.

"No, but you have heard him, for it was he who sustained the firing which we have heard for the last half hour or so, and I have just learned that a strong Russian detachment which had come to reconnoitre the neighbourhood, has been repulsed with considerable loss. Alas! I much fear," added the Count with a sigh, "that all this courage and devotion is destined to be in vain. A fatality seems to hang over this devoted land which renders nugatory the bravest efforts of her sons. It is, nevertheless, true that we have accomplished much, very much, since I saw you last, and this Lithuania of ours, which the Russians had believed crushed and spiritless, has stirred herself up and assumed an attitude of fearless defiance. But, then, what can we effect, impoverished as we are by a government whose interest it was and is to drain and exhaust our resources? It was imperatively necessary that we should have been supported by the Polish regiments, who, in their turn, could do nothing without us. Conceive, then,



the blind infatuation of our brethren of Warsaw, who, apparently content with having driven the enemy from their city, though they are yet scarcely masters of their own suburbs, rest calmly within their lines, employing all their resources in strengthening their defences, and keeping an army of Poles which, with the co-operation of their provinces, might emancipate the country, uselessly employed in marching and countermarching and skirmishing around the ramparts of Warsaw! Can they be mad enough to suppose that without moving from their position, they can sustain a regular war with the Russian empire? Surely they cannot be so silly, so presumptuous! No, their manifest duty would have been to throw their army at once on Lithuania, and by the aid of the powerful reinforcements here awaiting them, make head against the Russians beyond the Dnieper. Then almost the whole of Poland proper would be embarked in the struggle, and our military operations having a basis so extensive would command vast supplies of every kind. I repeat, this was our only chance of counterbalancing the mighty power of Russia—it was the popular cry from the Vistula to the Willia. Well! instead of that, here they go on, temporising as coolly as possible, stretching out the war by slow degrees, and acting just as though they had vast provinces in their rear which they waited to organise and bring forward to their aid. And instead of taking instant advantage of the pub

lic enthusiasm so fortunately excited, they stake their only chance on the chimerical prospect of an Anglo-French intervention in our favor. Alas! they know not that it is victory which calls forth the good offices of allies, and that in a struggle so unequal as this, negotiation is useless if a whole people does not rise with one consent and strike a determined blow for freedom!" Here the Count paused, and stood silent with folded arms, his head bowed down and his eyes filled with tears.

"But think not, my dear Raphael," he resumed, after a short silence, "that I shall permit these things to discourage me; no! I shall, with God's help, go resolutely forward, though I cannot refrain from telling you that I have nothing but fears for the result. Ah! I am now sadly convinced that you were right in your opinion that Poland is not prepared for such an attempt as this."

"And that is still my opinion," replied Raphael; "but since I could not get others to think as I do, why, I have only to repeat that I will follow you to the end, whatever it may be, saying with Horace:

*"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."*

"Nor must I forget," cried the Count, with reviving animation, "that it is for me to give you the example.—And now let us seek Rosa, from whom I have too long detained you. Ah, Raphael! I could scarcely tell you the admirable courage and fortitude which that dear girl has

displayed during the last three or four months. You have but to recall to your mind the condition in which you left us, with the difficult task before us of rousing the slumbering patriotism of the neighborhood. In executing our mission we had to brave many dangers, yet was Rosa ever at my side, cheering me on by her voice and smile, as though death were not hovering over every step we took. Nay, there were not wanting occasions when, elevated by the fervor of patriotism above the little weaknesses of her sex, her voice mingled with mine in entreating the tepid and wavering to come forth on behalf of their country. The consequence is that many of our good people look upon her as one inspired, and venerate her beyond measure. Now her attention is entirely given to the wounded and the sick, for, unhappily, the cholera fills our hospitals with more victims than the arms of the Russians. At the present moment we should in vain seek her out of the hospital, for an engagement having just taken place, many wounded have of course been brought in, and she is attending them with the priest and the surgeon."

"Ah my dear Count!" exclaimed Raphael ardently, "I will endeavor to imitate the heroic virtues of our Rosa, and by so doing render myself more worthy of her."

The Count pressed the hand of his young friend in silence, and just then he pointed to where Rosa stood, and both hastened to join her. She was, as her father had expected, assisting the surgeon to dress the wounds of the

patients. At the moment when she perceived her father and Raphael she was standing before some hand-barrows on which were stretched the victims of the recent conflict. Turning quickly she came forward to meet her betrothed husband, her beautiful face beaming with joy which she sought not to conceal.

"God be praised," said she, "that you are come back to us in safety!—Oh, Raphael, how fervently have I prayed for you! But come here, and let us put off our congratulations and rejoicings to a more fitting opportunity; here are some poor men who stand in need of assistance, and we may not think of deserting them to indulge our own private feelings!"

And so saying, she moved away to help the surgeon and his assistants to get the wounded men placed in bed, and their wounds washed and dressed, Rosa all the time whispering to them sweet words of kindness and consolation which fell like balm on the hearts of the sufferers. As they listened to her soft, low voice, they indeed seemed to forget their pain, while she, happy in being able to impart consolation, never thought of retiring until she had satisfied herself that nothing was left undone that might add to their comfort. She then followed her father and Raphael, and the remainder of the day was passed in the overflowing happiness of being again together after weary months of separation.

Next day Raphael, with his own vassals, took



an active part in that partisan warfare which the Count and his son were so successfully carrying on. Notwithstanding all the difficulty of communicating with each other, and the lamentable want of unity attending thereon, the chief object of all the leaders in Lithuania was the deliverance of Wilna, and thither all their energies were bent, while on the other hand it was the grand stronghold of the Russians. The result was that Count Bialewski's district, which lay near the frontiers of the Poland of 1815, being full forty leagues from Wilna was not, at this juncture, very closely watched by the Russians who had too much to do and to mind in various quarters nearer home. The Count profited by the opportunity to give the best training he could to his corps of volunteers. Unfortunately there was a great deficiency of arms, so that many brave fellows were rendered useless who might have done good service, and what damped more than all the courage of those battalions who were armed in one way or another, was the total want of that death-dealing artillery with which the Russians were so well provided, and without which the Poles could never venture to attack their enemies on the open field. The only hope was the appearance of the Polish army which was daily expected, but alas! never came. The Count and his friends displayed the most indefatigable activity, and the most fearless bravery, while seeking to gain time, until Poland should arise and assert her

rights. At length a detached corps of about two thousand five hundred men appeared in Wolhynia, but with such a trifling force nothing serious could be attempted, and after some desperate efforts, this brigade was forced to take refuge in Gallicia and give up their arms to the Austrian authorities. It was only after the defeat of Ostrolenka that a larger body of the Polish army, then retreating on Warsaw, decided on entering Lithuania, and though this opening was certainly under ominous circumstances, yet the Count welcomed with joy the approach of the army, and prepared to do all in his power to sustain and strengthen it.

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## CHAPTER XII.

THREE Polish brigades, forming altogether about ten thousand men, successively and at short intervals, entered Lithuania, having with them about thirty pieces of cannon. One of these divisions, making its way through the vast forest of Bialowiez, arrived within a short distance of the Castle, and immediately communicated with the Count. The appearance of these Polish troops at once revived the flagging spirits of the people, and filled them with hope and joy. The artillery, above all, was greeted

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with transport, and it was no uncommon sight to see the peasantry crowding around the field-pieces, touching them, as though to be certain of their reality, and even kissing them with cries of joy and exultation. All fear was at an end, and victory was sure to rest on the unfurled flag of Poland. And in truth we can scarcely doubt that if the main body of the Polish army had sustained this first expedition, with the insurrection in Lithuania, where almost the entire province was perfectly organised, the destiny of Poland might have been changed and the oppressor driven from her soil. But what could be effected by a detached corps, when the main body itself, after a murderous battle, retreated on Warsaw?—With the clear and quick perception of a veteran commander the Count at once perceived that they were again to be disappointed, and his foresight was but too soon justified. The brigade which had encamped for a short time near his castle, suddenly received orders to repair by forced marches into Samogitia, where the two corps by which it had been preceded had already obtained some success against the Russians. These three brigades, when joined together, were to have marched on Wilna, and taken it at all hazards ; but most unfortunately, jealousy glided in between the three commanders—the time for action passed away in vain contention, and when the greatest unanimity was required in order to keep the Russians at bay, discord

and envy were suffered to do their fatal work, and the national cause was the sacrifice. The enemy at once covered Wilna, easily repulsed the ill-concerted attack of the Polish army (though to do the Poles justice they fought with heroic courage,) and extending his lines he drove those demoralized bands before him to the Prussian frontier. A number of the Polish soldiers, betrayed and abandoned by their chiefs, gave up their arms to the Prussians with many a bitter curse; while another division of the army fought on with desperate courage, and with loud cries implored their comrades to come back over the lines and aid them for the honor of Poland, whereupon the latter, disarmed and prisoners as they were, were roused with sudden fury when they saw their brethren refusing to fly, and dying like heroes beneath the overwhelming blows of the Russians; and snatching their arms from the pile where they lay, they shook off the grasp of the Prussians, and springing over the ditch which formed the frontier line, they flew to the assistance of their gallant brethren. In vain would their unworthy commanders have interposed their authority to restrain them—the greater number heard not a word they said, and resolutely preferred death to slavery. Some there were, nevertheless, who still hesitated, being intimidated by the positive prohibition of their officers, and the menaces of the Prussian soldiers. These brave Poles, who of course regarded discipline as sacred,



but whose hearts were with their struggling companions, conjured their officers with tearful eyes to lead them back to the battle.

Just at this moment a cavalier was seen to break forth from amidst the tumultuous line beyond the frontier, and he was quickly recognised for an aid-de-camp of the commander-in-chief. Urging his horse to the utmost he quickly joined the prisoners, paused, pistol in hand, within twenty paces of the group of renegade generals, and taking aim at the chief amongst them, he shot him dead on the spot, with a furious malediction.—After this retributive act, the whole body of the Poles ranged themselves again under their banners and made a desperate attempt to pierce the enemy's lines, in order to get back into Poland. Some days sooner they might have succeeded, but as it was the attempt was a signal failure. The time lost through the perfidy of the generals, and the indecision of the troops, had crushed the insurrection, so that after a most disastrous retreat, and several severe engagements, when surrounded by the overpowering number of the Russians, the poor harrassed Poles, were finally driven to take refuge on the inhospitable territory of Prussia. Four thousand infantry, and two thousand cavalry, there gave up their arms, together with twenty pieces of artillery. Another division consisting of two thousand foot, and twelve hundred horse, had a little before done the same. Upwards of three thousand of the insurgents returned to

their homes, while some other bands, with persevering, but alas! fruitless bravery, took up their abode in the woods and marshes whence they waged a war of extermination on the enemy. There remained about three thousand of the regular army, who, under the command of an intrepid officer, determined to make their way back into Poland. Now fighting, and anon escaping the enemy by skilful manœuvres they had traversed all Lithuania, bending their course towards the forest of Bialowiez, where they hoped to enjoy a brief respite, being there sheltered from all pursuit. It was from this heroic band that Count Bialewski received the confirmation of the melancholy news which had already reached him.

"All is over, my dear Count," said one of the principal officers, who was an old friend; "Lithuania is lost to Poland, and Poland herself can only now be saved by miracle. The Russians are after us with a superior force, and before two hours their van-guard will appear on the plain. Resistance would now be useless, and your best course is to follow us to Warsaw as soon as you can gather up your most valuable effects."

"Don't you think," answered the Count, "that we could keep the enemy for some time before the castle, which is now tolerably well fortified, so as to cover your retreat?"

"And do you imagine," returned the generous officer, "that we would consent to leave you

exposed to all the vengeful fury of the Russians, that we ourselves might escape? No, rather would we remain, that all might perish together. But the voice of duty calls us to Warsaw to aid our comrades in its defence. Come, then, with us, Bialewski! and if any of your people will follow us, they will render a last service to the national cause."

"You are right," said the Count, "we should never yield to despair, and must try our fortune while even one chance remains to us."

And so saying he quickly entered the castle, informed Raphael, Casimir and Rosa of his newly-formed resolution; then bade a kind farewell to the vicar, whom he charged to watch over the tenantry whom he so unwillingly left, and proceeded to collect together the faithful band which had hitherto followed his banners.

"My comrades!" said the Count, "we have nothing more to do in Lithuania—the game is up with us here, but if the jade Fortune has played us false, she has not, thank God, extinguished our courage. Let all those then who owe her a spite come with me and seek revenge in Poland proper—remembering always that you are free either to come or stay. For myself, I have resolved to follow these true sons of Poland and share their fate whatever it may be. Whoever decides on following my example will meet me in half an hour at the bivouac on the plain."

At the time appointed, three or four hundred brave and resolute men appeared before the

Count, and were immediately admitted into the ranks of the soldiers, who received them with melancholy satisfaction. The signal for departure was given, and for the second time the Count bade adieu to the ancient halls of his fathers. And so the column moved on in profound silence, and with a double quick pace, being apprehensive of a surprise from the Russians who, with vastly superior numbers were constantly manœuvring to hem in the devoted little army. The Poles were already within a league or so of the great forest where they were sure of finding a safe refuge—the tops of its tallest trees were already visible on the horizon, when, in traversing a plain towards a small river, they discovered that the Russians were drawn up on the opposite bank to dispute the passage.

“Fear nothing, my lads!” cried the Polish commander, in a loud, cheerful voice, “it is only their van-guard. Forward to the charge, and let not a trigger be drawn till you are within arm’s length.”

The Poles advanced with fearless intrepidity; one party throwing themselves on the narrow bridge which crossed the river, while the others sprang into the river, which was fortunately fordable, and both together charged the Russian cavalry with a force which made them reel backwards. But the confusion was only momentary, for they quickly drew up again in good order on the plain which the Poles must necessarily cross and sought to obstruct their pro-



gress by vigorous and repeated charges. The Polish regulars, firm as rocks in their places, still marched on and made good their way, presenting to the enemy an unbroken array of bristling bayonets. Unfortunately the Count's followers, fully as courageous, but being utterly inexperienced in the rude trade of war, could not resist the mighty force of the Russian cavalry, and though still keeping their ground they suffered their ranks to be broken through and disorder of course ensued. At the voice of the Count a square was formed around Rosa who had been thus left in the midst of the confusion. Raphael and Casimir threw themselves forward drawing after them the bravest of their followers—their fearless valor drove back the Russian troopers, and thus gave time for their people to close up their broken ranks. Yet another effort and the enemy fell back still farther, but just as Raphael stretched out his arm to prevent Casimir from pursuing them too far, he saw him stagger, and received him in his arms. The ill-fated young man made a sign that all was over with him, murmured his father's name and expired. A ball had pierced his bosom. Raphael could not desert the body of his friend, and carried it aside, with the assistance of some of his friends, contriving as they did so, to conceal their mournful burden from the Count, who, on his part, was seeking Rosa, believing that she alone was in danger. Meanwhile the plain was crossed; the soil be-

came rough and uneven, and the Russian cavalry, jaded and exhausted, could urge their horses no farther. Upon this the Poles quickened their march, reached the forest, and when they found themselves safe within its giant enclosure they embraced and congratulated each other with many a joyous acclamation.

“But Casimir—where is he?” demanded the Count, as he fixed his astonished gaze on the dejected countenance of Raphael. The latter could not speak, but his tears rushed forth unbidden.

“Ha! then my son is dead!” cried the poor father, at once catching in the fatal truth. The tears—the scalding tears of anguish rolled fast from his eyes, and his head sank heavily on his bosom; but suppressing his emotion by an effort worthy of himself, he pressed his daughter to his heart, as though fearful lest she, too, might be torn from him; he looked around on his sympathising friends, and said in a firm voice:

“But wherefore do I weep? Surely my boy could not have died a more glorious death. To my country, then, do I offer up this sacrifice—to my country and my God—may it be one of propitiation!” Whereupon he proceeded with equal firmness to take the necessary measures for having the beloved remains conveyed in safety to the spot which he selected for its last resting place—for poor Casimir might not lie in the tomb of his fathers. Again the march was

resumed, and having soon after received a slight reinforcement sent by the commander-in-chief, this remnant of the Polish army once more entered Praga. The Count took his daughter immediately to Warsaw, where a sister of his late wife resided. Here he gave a few days to the indulgence of his heavy sorrow, for though the soldier could not openly give way to his feelings, yet the heart of the father was deeply wounded by the loss of his only, his brave and noble son. But he was soon aroused from his lethargy of woe by the stirring importance of what was passing around him. It was then the middle of August. The Polish army was encamped under the walls of Warsaw, and was still exceedingly formidable, for though compromised at first by the excessive circumspection of its chiefs, and seriously weakened by a constant succession of new generals, it was still an effective force of 70,000 men. Such was the position of the Polish army when 120,000 Russians, furnished with four hundred pieces of cannon, took up their quarters in the neighborhood, and prepared for a general attack. Meanwhile the city was a prey to anarchy and discord. That unhappy people, always suspicious, and always divided amongst themselves, slaughtered in their prisons either those whom they had reason to suspect of being Russian spies, or the generals to whom they attributed the failure of the revolution. And at a time when the voice of their suffering country called them to rally

on their ramparts for the defence of the city, they were found debating in their club-rooms, and in the municipal chambers, each putting forth his claim to an authority which was now but a phantom, and discussing public reforms with the hosts of the Czar before their gates, ready to pounce on the last remaining hope of Poland. Nevertheless there was still one vigorous arm to curb these devastating passions, and to make at least a dignified preparation for the death-agony of the Polish nation, which could not be far distant. Count Bialewski, seeing the deplorable condition of the city, hastened to offer his services to the newly-installed governor, who was certainly doing his utmost to restore order, and his proposal was thankfully accepted. Raphael, with his corps of Lithuanian volunteers, joined the ranks of the army, and were stationed in one of the principal redoubts not far from the gates of the city. The army stood prepared for a desperate resistance, and notwithstanding the great inequality of the opposing forces, no true Pole had ceased to hope for a favorable result. The field marshal in command of the Russian army was not blind to the determination of the Poles, and having taken good note of their preparations, he saw that he could only enter Warsaw by a tremendous sacrifice, and, therefore, tried to effect a compromise offering to the Polish army an honorable capitulation. He promised, in his master's name, a free pardon for the past, pro-



mises for the future, together with a redress of those grievances which were the immediate cause of the rebellion, and an investigation into the affairs of certain provinces which were considered peculiarly aggrieved. But as the Poles had made up their minds to expiate their numerous faults and errors by a glorious end, they would listen to no terms that did not include their complete independence, and such was the answer officially returned to the Russian commander. Warsaw was surrounded by a double belt of fortifications, which would have required for their defence a much larger force than they could now have, for a body of twenty thousand men had been detached from the main army some days before in order to provide a commissariat for the city, with orders at the same time to turn the enemy's flank, not more to create a serious diversion in that quarter than to prove that the Poles were still bold enough to make an attack. Yet with all these disadvantages, each individual within the city applied himself courageously to the performance of his duty.

Amidst all the melancholy bustle of preparation for the last act of the tragedy, the Count and Raphael were grievously anxious about Rosa, and fearfully asked each other what was to become of her if Warsaw was taken by the Russians of which there was, alas! but too much probability. Who was to protect her amid the horrors likely to be enacted in Warsaw? When

the Count repeated to Raphael his terrible apprehensions, the latter was stunned into silence, but after some reflection, he found voice to say:

“My dear Count! notwithstanding the sad scenes going on every where around us, suffer me to entreat that the probationary term may be abridged, so that I may acquire a legal title to become the protector of Rosa. Were she only mine in reality, I could do and dare every thing for her, and though the war may wage around, she will have a double chance of safety when her father and her husband will be near to guard her.”

“I am so thoroughly convinced of your prudence and discretion, my dear Raphael, not to speak of your sincere devotion to our interests, that I cheerfully approve of your suggestion. At any moment I may fall as my poor son Casimir has done, and I can die contented when I leave my daughter such a protector. Come, then, let us speak to Rosa on the subject, and if she consents, three days hence she shall become your wife.”

Rosa, as she listened to her father's representations, appeared deeply moved by the generous devotion of Raphael, and when she had heard all, she unhesitatingly placed her hand in his, and told him that she was perfectly willing to have the ceremony performed at whatever time her father and he deemed it advisable. Raphael was not slow in acting on this gracious permission, for the truth was that he could scarcely absent

himself even for a short time from his military duties, which formed, alas! a sad contrast to those which he now so eagerly set about. The marriage was to take place (in the most private manner) on the 6th of September, at 5 o'clock in the morning, when on the eve of that day the Russian columns were put in motion, and opened a terrible fire on the Poles, with the hope of dividing their ranks, and of enfeebling their strength, by forcing them to spread their lines farther than they could with safety. The redoubt occupied by Raphael and his Lithuanians was attacked with the utmost fury, and the shock was truly terrific—sixty guns played for several hours on that devoted spot, and it was by superhuman courage and fortitude that its gallant defenders kept their position, exposed as they were to a murderous fall of grape-shot and cannon-balls. Yet still they wavered not though the foe was evidently advancing for a closer and more deadly assault.

In the meantime, a fierce struggle was going on amid the ruins; everywhere the Russians prevailed, for they numbered twenty to one, yet the Poles, the brave unfortunate Poles, died with heroic courage, nor flinched a step until they were mowed down like ripe grain in harvest. So fiercely and successfully did they deal their vengeance that they had soon before them a new rampart, composed of the dead bodies of their mortal foes. But, oh, despair! with all their audacity and all their fortitude, they were

forced to abandon the redoubt and retire within the walls, owing to a want of ammunition. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when another redoubt, which had been carried by the Russians, blew up with a tremendous explosion, a Polish officer having, as he quitted the place, set fire to a small train of powder, so that the victors might be buried under the ruins. Yet still the Russians went on, and on, pursuing their success with inconceivable rapidity; already they had gained the heights which command the suburbs called Czysta, when on a sudden the Polish artillery, directed by a master hand, opened upon them a terrific fire; being entirely exposed to the dread range of the balls, the Russian columns wavered and hesitated, and being just then attacked by two battalions of Polish infantry they retreated and took refuge in the outer line of the fortifications, of which they had long since gained possession. Both armies being faint and exhausted, it was now tacitly agreed to postpone the contest till the morrow. During the day, negotiations were again opened, but nothing decisive could be arranged, owing to the diversity of opinion amongst the different members of the Executive, some of whom were willing to give up a struggle whose end it was easy to foresee, and to submit at once, while others declared that they would die sword in hand, resisting to the last an unjust and lawless oppression.

It was during this short armistice that Ra-



phael stole away from his post to kneel with Rosa before the altar. A gloom like that of death overhung the devoted city.—Scarcely time had they to say farewell after the ceremony was concluded, for even the tocsin pealed, and the drum beat to arms, and Raphael could only exclaim as he pressed Rosa to his heart in a first embrace:—

“Now, I have acquired the right to die in your defence. Oh! that I may be enabled to save you, and life itself will be but a poor sacrifice.”

“And I,” murmured Rosa, as her tears fell fast on the bosom of her husband, “and I, Raphael, am now entitled to share the dangers and the trials of your future life, and be sure, my beloved, that you will never find me shrink from danger or from suffering when it is to be met by your side.” The moments were pressing, and having again bade farewell to his drooping bride, Raphael hastened away to resume his post, while the Count returned to his place in the council, where the fate of Warsaw was then under discussion.

The squares were filled with the panic-stricken inhabitants, who were discussing in low tones the mournful news of the day. All those who were able to carry arms hastened to the ramparts, and to the different outlets of the city. Women and children toiled away at the barricades, and in preparing cartridges for the soldiers and wadding for the guns. Hour after

hour long trains of carts arrived with the wounded, and each fresh arrival was greeted with mournful cries and lamentations. The truce having expired ere yet the council had reached any satisfactory conclusion, the cannon-ading was again heard, "and the discharge incessantly poured out by three hundred and fifty fiery mouths," says one of the writers from whom we have borrowed our historical facts, "caused the earth to tremble for miles around." And this went on without a single pause from one o'clock in the afternoon till the darkness of night closed in. In the very midst of the frightful carnage and the increasing conflagration of the now ruined suburb of Cyszta, Raphael was still seen, by the light of the flames, urging on his brave followers, though himself bleeding from many a wound, and enfeebled from loss of blood; nor could he be prevailed upon to retire while yet one lingering hope remained. But vain—all vain—this heroic valor, and vain the unexampled devotion of the gallant few who still held out, for even then the Russians were entering the doomed city in ruthless triumph, and Poland—poor, unfortunate Poland—was again at the mercy of her deadly enemies.

## CHAPTER XIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the sublime efforts of her defenders, Warsaw was just about to become the prey of the Russians, when the government, in opposition to the legislative assembly which was then sitting, took upon itself to order a cessation of arms, and commanded the retreat of the Polish battalions. Twenty thousand Russians, between killed and wounded, lay on the field, a striking and fearful proof that the victory had been dearly earned. And the Polish army, conquered as it was, gave the Russians serious alarm, so that dreading their vengeance, should they be driven to despair, the victors gave them permission to depart with their arms and baggage. Twenty thousand of the bravest and best of the sons of Poland, availing themselves of these favorable terms, marched that day from the gates of that city they had gallantly, but vainly, defended, and bearing with them eighty pieces of cannon, they took their way towards the fortress of Modlin, hoping to rally around them some scattered Polish corps which would have made them, as they calculated about sixty thousand strong. But the timidity of the officers of those detachments destroyed this reasonable hope and the main body thus left to its own

resources, wandered about sometime longer without end or aim.

The Capitol being lost, and each one considering that the national cause was definitively ruined, it was generally thought that the army would very soon make a formal submission to the Russian Government. Raphael, though serving only as a volunteer, could not think of deserting the national banner while yet it was unfurled, and therefore thought himself obliged to accompany the army, having merely found time to say farewell to the Count and Rosa, and to tell them that he hoped for a speedy return as the army must soon be broken up. But, alas ! for that gallant army, having no commander of sufficient energy to mark out a course of action and see it executed, the troops were left entirely to their own guidance, and when the first effects of their disappointment had somewhat passed away a violent reaction succeeded, and while it lasted, some were of the opinion that they should march back to Warsaw and make an attempt to recover it by a surprise ; while others strenuously advised that they should clear a passage for themselves to Lithuania, revive the insurrection in that province, and sustain a defensive war, while a third class insisted that the mountains of Cracow afforded the only and best ramparts for a protracted resistance. But none of these plans was adopted, and, after much fruitless parleying with the Russian commander, the Poles, closely pressed upon and har-



rassed by the enemy's squadrons, gained the western frontier, and after some slight skirmishing with the enemy in order to secure their retreat, they took refuge in the Prussian dominions. There they were, of course, compelled to lay down their arms, and condemned themselves to a voluntary exile, but they had, at least, escaped the hated yoke of the Czar. At the moment when they crossed the frontier, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish army addressed to all Europe these noble and touching words:

“ Ere yet it bids adieu to its native land—to that beloved soil watered with the tears and the blood of her sons—the Polish army declares before God and the entire world that each individual Pole is as deeply impressed as he ever was with the sanctity and justice of his country's cause. We, moreover, consider ourselves bound to make this solemn appeal to the nations, and to the rulers of the civilized world, but in a more especial manner to those governments who, at the Congress of Vienna, displayed a peculiar interest in the cause of Poland. Confiding to them the destiny and, in fact, the political existence of that nation, ever unfortunate but never subdued—of a nation which is called, as we know and feel, to exercise a strong influence over the civilization, the equilibrium and the peace of Europe. The Greeks, the Belgians, and other nations have been in turn objects of solicitude to the great Powers. Shall the Poles alone be left to struggle unaided and un-

pitied? No; forbid it the majesty and the justice of kings!

“To you, then, powers of the earth; to you, and to the sympathy of your subjects, does the national army of Poland address itself in this hour of affliction, conjuring you, in the name of the most high God, in the name of humanity, and the inalienable rights of man, to take those liberties for which we have battled in vain under your protection, and to see that justice may preside at the new arrangements which will soon be made for our bleeding country. Be assured, that even yourselves are interested in securing the rights of Poland, so as to arrange with precision the balance of power in Europe. By restoring our drooping and long suffering nation to independence and prosperity you will necessarily promote the general good, for Europe is, and ought to be, but one great family, and that which promotes the well-being of one nation or member of the confederacy, ought more or less to benefit all.”

“On the Prussian frontier, this 4th day of October, 1831.”

The commander-in-chief, notwithstanding that the hardships and privations of a penniless exile stared him in the face, as it did almost every individual of the army, yet made it a point to remit to the Bank of Poland a considerable sum which he had drawn thence for the immediate wants of the army, at his departure from Warsaw; the funds belonging to the

minister of war were also remitted in full. Thirty thousand Poles then passed into Prussia, a similar number having already taken refuge in Gallicia. A sort of amnesty was then proposed to the privates and non-commissioned officers, who would have refused and remained in exile rather than give themselves up again to the Russians, but this the Prussian authorities would not permit, and they were driven once more into the power of their implacable foe. No sooner were they again on their native soil than they were laid hold of and drafted off to Russia proper where they were speedily incorporated into Muscovite regiments. The commissioned officers of every grade, being still menaced with the vengeance of the Czar, traversed Germany amid the loudest expressions of public sympathy, and entered France, where they were received with generous hospitality.

Raphael, as we have said, was obliged to follow the fortunes of the army, and was thus effectually separated from Rosa and her father. With his heart torn by the most fearful anxiety on their account, and his health rapidly undermined by the weakness attending upon his numerous wounds, he was but ill able to encounter the harassing fatigue of that long, toilsome march, and he had no sooner attained a place of safety beyond the frontier than he was attacked by a fever so violent that for some days his life was in danger, and for months long its effects were felt in an utter prostration

of strength, accompanied by a dull, heavy languor. Not a word could he hear of those beloved ones now so far distant, while every day his mind was tortured by the pitiable news from Poland.

But now, let us return to the Count and Raphael's young bride, that we may see how it fared with them during this long and dreary interval. At the moment when the Russians entered Warsaw (on the 8th of September,) the Count, who had till then given all his time and attention to the defence of the city, suddenly appeared before his daughter, and even he, that gallant veteran, shuddered as he thought of the impending danger.

"What is become of Raphael?" demanded Rosa, when she perceived that her father was alone.

"Raphael is safe and well," returned the Count, "but he is retained by honor and duty in the ranks of the army, which has made its retreat in good order, and will soon obtain advantageous terms (at least, I hope so,) as the price of its submission. Fifty or sixty thousand Poles under arms may yet draw together, and the enemy has good reason to fear the despair of our soldiers. Thanks to this fortunate circumstance, we may yet hope that the reaction will be less dreadful than we had anticipated, and we have already the field-marshal's assurance that an amnesty will be offered to all those who in three days after its publication,



will submit to the Imperial authority. Be of good heart, then, my child! for the next capitulation of the army will bring Raphael back again to us, and then we can patiently resign ourselves to the decrees of Providence, while looking forward to the coming of happier days."

"May God, in his boundless mercy, restore him to us, and then I can bear every thing." And as Rosa spoke, she repressed, by a vigorous effort, the tears which were ready to burst forth. "But, do you think, father, that we can reckon on this amnesty?"

"I do," replied the Count, "and that because it is a stroke of policy rather than an act of mercy. If the marshal had made this promise previous to the surrender of the city, I might have regarded it simply as a bait; but it is since he entered Warsaw that he gave us this assurance, and hence I, for my part, have every confidence in its truth."

However plausible were these reasons, it is certain that the Count, in order to re-assure his daughter, expressed a greater degree of confidence in this promise than he really felt. The first and second day after the reduction of Warsaw passed away without any appearance that could shake the public faith in these assurances of the Russian marshal. The Russians were in calm possession of the city, and from their strict and formal observance of military discipline, fully justify that sad and celebrated bulletin of

the French government—"Order reigns in Warsaw."

On the third day the act of amnesty was, indeed, proclaimed in favor of all who should come forward and make submission to the government. The Count was preparing to take this painful step, when one of his friends, who was a member of the chamber of deputies, hastily made his appearance and informed him of the arrest of one of his colleagues, Count Xavier Subatyn, which took place at the moment when he presented himself to obtain the benefit of the amnesty.

"So much for the honor and good faith of the Russians!" added the deputy as he retired, "and I would beg of you, my dear Count, to make your escape if you possibly can, or, at least, to keep yourself concealed."

"My dear father!" cried Rosa, who was greatly shocked by what she had heard, "you must instantly avail yourself of this friendly warning, and endeavor to elude the vengeance of these Russians."

"If it were not for you, my dear child! I would most willingly brave it. Every blow would redound to my honor and to their own disgrace, and I would have the satisfaction of dying for my country since I could not save her,"

"No, rather preserve yourself for her and for your children, my brother!" said his sister-in-law, "for such is your bounden duty. Rosa

shall remain with me till the storm is past and Raphael and yourself may with safety rejoin us."

"Yes, fly, fly, my father!" exclaimed Rosa earnestly, "the army cannot be far away, so that you may speedily join Raphael, and it will be so consoling for me to know that you are together. For us, we are in no danger, for surely even the Russians must respect our sex."

"For your sake, Rosa," replied the Count, "I will hide this aged head. But it must be within the city, as to leave it now would be utterly impossible. The sentinels are everywhere on the alert—there is not a gate or an outlet unguarded, and to attempt an escape would be certain death."

"We must then conceal you somewhere in the city," observed his sister-in-law, "and that will be no difficult task to me who am so well known in Warsaw. It is, however, absolutely necessary for us to make a prudent choice as every house will be open to the inspection of the Russian police."

"If you knew, my dear aunt," said Rosa, "any house of business where my father could be received in disguise, and pass for an assistant or accountant. No one would ever dream of looking for Count Bialewski under such a guise, and in a case of this kind the most preposterous plan is sure to be the most successful."

"You have just brought a capital idea to my mind, my dear Rosa!" exclaimed her aunt,

"there is a gardener somewhere in these suburbs to whose care I can entrust my brother's safety. He is a trusty patriot who has served his country on many a hard-contested field, so that I have every confidence in him, and I am quite sure that he will be overjoyed to receive the Count as a workman (provided it will be the means of saving him) while at the same time he will never for a moment lose sight of the respect due to him."

The Count listened to these kind projects with a reluctance he could not conceal, but there was no such thing as resisting the united entreaties of Rosa and her aunt, and he was forced to accede to their wishes. Having put on the usual attire of a laborer (procured for him by the servants) he took under his arm some gardening tools, and walked unmolested through the streets to the house of the worthy gardener, who, on learning who he was, received him with the utmost respect, and with many protestations of entire devotion. A few hours after the Count's departure, a Russian officer entered the house he had left, followed by several soldiers, and demanded to speak with Count Bialewski, whereupon the lady of the house appeared.

"Madam!" said the officer, "I have received orders to secure the Count, and as all the outer doors and passages of the house are guarded it would be useless to attempt keeping him concealed from us, since he cannot escape."

"Sir, all the inner doors of this house shall



be immediately thrown open for we have no cause to shrink from your investigation. But suffer me to tell you that you will search in vain, for Count Bialewski is not here."

The officer seemed a good deal disappointed by the assured manner in which the lady spoke these words; nevertheless, he proceeded to search the house (though preserving a show of politeness) questioning closely every individual he met. To Rosa he addressed himself more particularly, questioning and cross-questioning her with the hope of eliciting some hint as to the retreat of the Count. But Rosa met and baffled all his inquiries with singular presence of mind, and at last the officer withdrew to report his want of success. No sooner was he gone than Rosa and her aunt threw themselves into each other's arms, weeping with joy that the Count had taken their advice and escaped in time, though they still trembled with apprehension for his safety. From time to time they sent out messengers through the city to find out what was passing; but though they heard nothing that immediately concerned themselves or those they loved, yet they were grieved and even horrified by the accounts of the merciless punishment hourly inflicted on their fellow-citizens in direct disregard of the published amnesty. Towards evening they were startled by the intelligence that the house was again surrounded by Russian troops.

"Let us recommend ourselves to God, my

dear aunt," said Rosa, "for assuredly some new misfortune awaits us." She had scarcely spoken, when the same officer made his appearance.

"Madam!" said he, in a tone that savored of kindness and compassion, "I regret that it becomes my duty to arrest the daughter of Count Bialewski, and conduct her to the castle."

"My niece!—oh, heavens! is it possible?"

"I think I am justified in informing you, Madam," stammered the officer, in evident embarrassment, "that the young lady will have but to answer a few questions before the military commission, and will then be restored to liberty."

"I am fully aware, sir, that you are not to be turned from the execution of the orders you have received; but you will assuredly permit me to accompany my niece—I am responsible to her family for her safety while under my care, and I would wish to be near her in that fearful trial, that I may keep up her fainting courage."

"Madam! as I have no orders to that effect, I am compelled to refuse your request."

"In that case, my dearest aunt," said Rosa, in firm accents, "you have but to keep up your spirits as well as you can in my absence, and be assured that nothing shall be forced from me by intimidation. Pray for me, then, it is all you can do—pray that strength may be given me from above."

Having tenderly embraced her aunt, she followed the officer from the room, and from the house, amid the tears and sobs of the assembled domestics. A carriage was waiting at the gate, into which Rosa was handed by the officer, for the authorities dared not take her through the streets on foot, justly fearing that such a sight would have roused the people to madness. The carriage stopped before the gates of the castle, once the residence of Poland's kings, and more recently the seat of the legislative body, but now entirely occupied by Russian soldiers—a barrack for them, and a prison for the patriot sons of Poland. Rosa followed her conductor into a large hall, where five or six officers of high rank were seated around a table, covered with papers. She took a seat, on the invitation of the president of the commission, and then calmly awaited the commencement of the examination. The judges took a rapid survey of her face and figure, and it was evident that they could not help admiring her very uncommon beauty, together with a lofty dignity seldom seen in one so young, and each in turn averted his gaze when he met the calm, soft eye of Rosa.

“We see before us, do we not, the daughter of Count Bialewski?” said the president, at length.

“The same, my lord.”

“Your father, young lady, was yesterday within the city of Warsaw. How is it, then,

that he has refused to acknowledge the imperial authority by coming forward to avail himself of the act of amnesty?—assuredly the Count must have known himself undeserving of pardon when he chose rather to seek safety in flight.”

“My lord! my father was quite willing to present himself before you, for his noble nature was never prone to suspect the good faith of others; but, having been warned of the fate awaiting all those who came forward to obtain the benefit of the so-called amnesty, he at length yielded to my pressing entreaties, and, as you say, sought safety in flight.”

“So you confess that you did connive at his escape, Mademoiselle?” demanded the president in a severe tone.

“How could I make you believe, even if I sought to do so, that a daughter would look coldly on her father’s imminent danger?”

“Lady, you have yet to learn that the rights of the Emperor are far above those of a father. From the moment when Count Bialewski was called to render an account of his conduct before the representative of our gracious sovereign, to turn him aside in any way from the performance of that imperious duty was a grievous wrong—nay, a crime.”

“I have only to say,” replied Rosa with virtuous indignation, “that I have been brought up in a different way of thinking.”

“Oh certainly,” returned the president with



cutting irony, "we all know the sentiments which the worthy Count was likely to instil into the minds of his children. He that was ever on the watch to foment rebellion could not be expected to preach loyalty to others."

"Count Bialewski has ever taught his children to be true and faithful to their God, their country, and their honor."

"Enough, young lady! it is not for you to bandy words with your judges."

"I should be truly sorry to be found deficient in the respect due to your high station, gentlemen!" replied Rosa with admirable composure, "but nothing in this world — no earthly presence — could deter me from defending the reputation of my father!"

"Beware what you say," said one of the other members of the commission, who evidently took an interest in Rosa, "your words may be taken as justifying treason!"

"Treason!" she replied with emphasis, "no, treason pursues a different course, and sacrifices neither repose, nor fortune, nor blood. Pursuing ever his own poor aggrandisement, the traitor works only deeds of darkness and infamy — far different was the course adopted by my father."

"He who raises his arm against his sovereign is a traitor!" resumed the president quickly.

"Against his *lawful* sovereign, my lord! — there I quite agree with you."

"This goes beyond all bounds!" cried the president with rising fury. "Do you then dare

to deny the authority of the Emperor?" Rosa was silent.

"Now, lady! the matter is just this—I am not at all surprised by your frankness, and it is, after all, more pleasing than hypocrisy, even though it does let us see your political opinions in all their naked deformity. Pass we over this, then, and let us return to the primary cause of your arrest. Your father cannot have escaped from the city—of that we are convinced—and there is every probability that the place of his retreat will not be long unknown to us. Will you, therefore, prevail upon him to appear before us? Such an act of submission on his part would gain the Emperor's favour, and, moreover, place you beyond all danger!"

"How! would you ask me to deliver up my father to you?" Rosa exclaimed, with a look of contempt which she could not repress. "Are you not aware that you address a Christian daughter?"

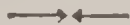
"Consider what I have told you, Mademoiselle! that the rights of his Imperial Majesty go beyond every other! We have means, too, for forcing obdurate criminals to confess—beware, I charge you!"

"Oh no! my lord!" replied Rosa with a celestial smile of triumph, "you have no means that can force from me aught that may prejudice my father."

"And is this your final decision, young lady?" Rosa made a gesture of assent.

“Well, then, you shall go to prison, and if the reflections of to-night do not alter your decision, to-morrow you shall undergo the ignominious torture of the knout, The lash will perhaps force you to open your obstinate mouth?”

“Oh, my God!” cried Rosa, as they led her away, “Thou thyself hast been cruelly scourged, and shall I shrink from following in thy blood stained traces?”



## CHAPTER XIV.

THE chamber to which Rosa was conducted was situated in the upper story of the castle, and its furniture consisted of one chair and a wretched bed on which a truss or two of straw had been recently shaken. One small, grated window looked out on the gardens and on the Vistula, whose broad basin lay still and calm in the bright moonlight. No sooner was Rosa left alone than she threw herself on her knees and fervently invoked the divine protection for herself and those she loved—asking not that the impending trials and dangers might be averted from her, but that strength might be given her to meet and support them with Christian fortitude. When she arose she found her-

self calm and resigned, and, throwing all her anxious care for her father and Raphael into the hands of God, she applied herself energetically to prepare her mind for the mental and bodily torture she was so soon to undergo. Far from seeking to banish the thoughts of what awaited her, from the vain fear of shaking her courage, she resolutely considered all the revolting details of that fearful punishment, and placing her trust in the Giver of all strength, she began even to feel a sort of supernatural triumph in the greatness of the torments to which she was doomed, and which might obtain for her the crown of martyrdom. It is a fact which no historian pretends to dispute that in all the revolutions and struggles of Poland, the national mind was strongly tinged with religious feeling. And this is easily accounted for, in that a nation so pre-eminently Catholic as Poland ever was, must naturally feel herself wronged by the dark and hypocritical policy which sought to turn her by one blow from the cherished faith of her fathers, and plunge her into the mire of schism, at the same time that it deprived her of her political rights. Amongst a religious people, questions of a religious nature are not confined to the learned, nor to any other class, they penetrate into all ranks, and affect, more or less, every individual, giving resistless power to the sinewy arm of the soldier, and lighting up the flame of enthusiastic devotion in the gentle heart of woman.



Hence it was that Rosa, in the consciousness of right, and relying on the protecting arm of God, could bid defiance to every torture which the oppressor might inflict upon her. She had long been accustomed, too, to overcome those vain terrors which exhaust the strength of the soul ere yet the hour of danger comes, and now she looked forward, with immovable resignation, to the hour of torture, believing that God himself for whose sake she was willing to bear it, would be near to support her in her agony. She sat down on the side of her straw couch, and with her eyes raised to heaven and her hands clasped together, she prayed once more for those beloved ones, that the anguish which they might endure on her account would be softened unto them. And thus she sank into a gentle slumber from which she did not awake till the sun shone into her miserable chamber.

Suddenly there came a deafening crash—the loud roll of the drum and the shrill music of the fifes and bugles, and Rosa was painfully recalled to the mighty power of those who held her country and herself in bondage. A few hours after sunrise her door was opened by a soldier, who placed on the shelf near her a piece of brown bread and a pitcher of water, and then silently withdrew, not without throwing a look of wonder on the fair and noble prisoner whom he had been appointed to guard. Rosa at first paid but little attention to the

breakfast which had been provided for her, but after an hour or two she began to feel faint from her long fast, and approaching the shelf, she broke with some difficulty a piece of the bread, and eat it, without any repining over its hardness and coarseness. She was just endeavoring to raise to her lips the heavy pitcher of water, when the door again opened, and she beheld a tall figure, clad in the extreme of fashion, which personage stood as though transfixed to the threshold by astonishment. What was Rosa's surprise when she recognised Raphael's worthless rival, Stanislaus Dewello!

"Mademoiselle!" said he, in a voice of deep emotion, "Will you permit an old friend to offer his services in effecting your liberation from this dismal prison?"

"My lord!" replied Rosa, with frigid politeness, "I can scarcely express the painful embarrassment arising from your presence. Forgetfulness, it seems to me, was all that you could hope from us!"

"You are severe, Mademoiselle, and seem to condemn too harshly the resentment which, as a man of honor, wronged and insulted, I could not avoid showing."

"I know not what you consider a wrong or an insult, my lord! nor do I desire to know, for I shall certainly consider as an insult offered to myself, any allusion of yours to the past. But one thing is quite clear to me, and that is, that all private resentments and individual interests

should be forgotten in the common interests of our country—of that country whom all her children are imperatively bound to serve.”

And who told you that I have abandoned the cause of my country, or how know you but I may at this very juncture be endeavouring to raise it from its cruel prostration? Yet on these points you should have been morally certain before you ventured to accuse me of treason.”

“I—I accuse no one, my lord! and I am always happy to hear that any one is more deserving of esteem than I had been led to believe.”

On hearing this, Stanislaus eagerly attempted to justify himself for the course he had taken, but as he proceeded he became sensible that though the passions, when they obtain the mastery, easily persuade their victim that all they urge him to do is right, and perfectly justifiable, yet it is not so easy to impose on pure and upright minds, who are the true judges of what is honorable. Moreover, as he went on endeavoring to explain what he called his recent coldness and reserve towards the great cause of which he had once been one of the boldest partisans, he began to understand how deplorably he had failed in the hour of danger and of trial. Alas! even at the hour when poor bleeding Poland lay writhing under the vengeful lash of her remorseless tyrant, had he not made common cause with the Russians? Had he not stooped to become the mean, interested sycophant of the

government, and had not many a substantial favor rewarded his shameful alliance with the enemy of his country? Yes, all that was true, and yet, strangely enough, Stanislaus had fallen so very low almost without being sensible of his fall. Firley, that accomplished spy, had skilfully probed and embittered the deep wounds of his master's proud heart. He had easily persuaded him to remain inactive when it appeared to gratify his revenge, and this neutrality, at such a trying moment had not failed to ingratiate the Russian authorities, who, ever skilful and ready to lay hold on any offered advantage, very soon bestowed on the renegade noble the most substantial marks of their approbation. They then proceeded to insinuate that he could make himself exceedingly useful in tranquilizing the country, and flattered his pride by some commissions wearing a very plausible exterior. On the other hand, that love of show and of pleasure, was fully gratified by those who well understood his flimsy character, and this went far to blind him to the consequences, leading him on headlong towards downright treachery. —He entered Warsaw, then, with the Russians who were very willing to have, if possible, some Polish deserters through whom they might subsequently carry on the government with more ease, availing themselves of the secrets which these men might be able to unfold.—Stanislaus had heard in rapid succession of Raphael's departure with his regiment, the expected arrest



of the Count, and finally the imprisonment and condemnation of Rosa. His ever lively imagination had at once represented to him that now was the time to recover the esteem of those whom he had so completely given up. He knew nothing of the secret marriage, and believed that if he could once effect Rosa's liberation, and obtain a full pardon for the Count, he might still carry out his favorite scheme of a marriage with Rosa. Full of these romantic ideas he had presented himself before Rosa; but the unbending rectitude of that young girl—the dignity of her mien, and the irresistible influence of her noble language, soon brought him down from the ideal height on which he had placed himself, and showed him all the depravity and the degradation into which he had fallen.—Overwhelmed with confusion, and stung with secret remorse, his frivolous mind sought to find an excuse in the mighty power of despairing love.

“And is it, then, you,” he exclaimed, “who reproach me with my errors? While with you, I lived irreproachable and honored, and it is only the racking sense of having lost you that has plunged me into this abyss whose horrors you so well describe! Is it then you who cast me off with disdain?”

“Nay, my lord,” returned Rosa, her beautiful features wearing an expression of mingled pity and reserve, “I pity the guilty much more than I despise them; but I do not think it at all right

that they should attempt to justify conduct which admits of no palliation."

"Well! even at the risk of crowning my offences," resumed Stanislaus, "I must and shall explain the purpose of my visit. Without taking much trouble to think over the causes which divided us, I began to think that in the evil days on which we have fallen, those petty causes might be mutually forgotten, and our hearts drawn together. Even if I admit the faults wherewith you reproach me, I have dared to hope that I can expiate them by my entire devotion to the interests of your family, and that I may, to a certain extent, be instrumental in healing the wounds of our country. I can secure life and fortune to your father, and, of course, your own immediate liberation. In mercy, then, do not again discourage those hopes which you see I cannot renounce; tell me, at least, that you will take an interest in the efforts which I shall make to regain your good opinion, and that one day or another ——"

"You have said enough, my lord!" interrupted Rosa, with unusual vivacity, "but you yourself do not know how offensive is this discourse to me. I am married, and Raphael is my husband?"

Stanislaus stood rooted to the spot, and the words which he had been about to utter, suddenly expired on his trembling lips. He had had but a moment of repentance — he had discovered the extent of his degradation, and had hoped to

recover himself, not by a generous sacrifice, but like all enervated and debased souls, by making conditions which would have ensured for him a sufficient compensation. But now his offers could not be accepted; he had humbled himself for nothing, and his passions, painfully curbed for a brief space, now sprang up again with violence, even as dry wood shoots upward and bursts into splinters after having been restrained by even a passing pressure.

“Madame!” said he, at length, with bitter irony, “you have then no need of my services, and I regret having troubled you as I did. You are now sure of protection, which will doubtless shield you from every danger, and I wish you much joy of your security. Do not fear any further importunity from me on any subject. Farewell, Madame!”

And away he went, once more in a frame of mind that fitted him for all and every thing, no matter how vile or base, so that he might gratify his revenge. Firley, who awaited him without, speedily availed himself of these good dispositions, and turned them, as he did everything, to his own account. As to Rosa, so great was her joy and thankfulness to get rid of her troublesome visitor, that for a little while her miserable chamber seemed a quiet and secure retreat; now she could almost fancy that she had been restored to liberty.”

“Oh, my God!” she exclaimed, “how much gratitude do I owe thee for having saved me

from the seductions of that man—for wretched, indeed, would have been my fate had I married him! It is thy holy religion which has taught me to prefer the eternal beauties of the mind and of the soul to the poor, perishable charms of face or form. Blessed and praised for ever be thy name, oh God!”

All that day did Rosa remain in her prison-chamber, trembling with apprehensions lest Stanislaus might again make his appearance. But the day passed away without any further molestation, and indeed without any incident save a visit from the gaoler about sun-down. Yet Rosa was not forgotten, for, at the moment when she was about to seek repose for the night, she was summoned again to appear before the military court. Having discovered, from the questions addressed to her, that her father’s asylum was still unknown, she could not refrain from expressing her satisfaction.

“Madame!” said the president, in a harsh, cold tone, “for we now know you as the wife of another rebel—you had better reflect a little upon the torture which awaits you, and do not flatter yourself that our sentence is but a mere idle threat, made use of to terrify you into compliance. Once more I ask, will you prevail upon Count Bialewski to submit to the imperial authority?—Remember that your submission will propitiate your judges. Moreover, you will do well to consider, that on the very first news of your punishment, your father will at



once come forward, so that your obstinacy will have no other result than that of incensing us still more against you all!"

"Blessed are they who suffer for righteousness sake!" replied Rosa, with invincible firmness, "those divine words are my hope and strength."

"Let the consequences of your mulish obstinacy fall, then, on your own head," cried the president, in a wrathful voice, "and on the heads of those whom you love so unwisely."

"And yet neither you nor your master shall go unpunished for your unholy persecution!" cried Rosa, with earnest solemnity; "God is the Supreme Judge of all, and he will have his day of retribution!"

"Silence, madame!" said the president, sternly, "silence becomes you—prepare to hear the final pronouncement of your sentence."

Having consulted for a few minutes with the other members of the commission, he arose and pronounced the definite sentence that the daughter of Count Bialewski, found guilty of high treason, was to be taken to the court-yard of the castle, and there receive twenty-five lashes of the knout, and then to be banished to Siberia, where she was to work in the mines.

Rosa heard this cruel decree with unmoved composure, and being brought back to her prison she passed the remainder of the night in prayer. Towards morning she fell into a slumber so that when the soldiers came to seek her

they found her asleep, with her head resting on the side of her bed. On being awakened she quickly arose, and having recommended herself once more to the Divine protection, she quietly followed the soldiers, who appeared surprised by such heroic courage in a young and high born lady. The court-yard was filled with soldiers, and the gates had been thrown open so that any who wished might enter. But the invitation was useless, for scarcely one individual could bear to look upon such a dismal sight, and least of all the poor heart-wrung Poles. Rosa ascended with a firm step a sort of large trestle which had been hastily thrown up in the court. She was then tied to a stake driven down into the ground, and the executioner having torn off the garments which covered her shoulders, prepared to strike at the first signal. The victim, deadly pale, but still composed, folded her arms on her bosom, as though to conceal as much of her nakedness as she could from the rude soldiers, and fixed her liquid eyes on the blue heaven above, and awaited the first blow—her long fair tresses unintentionally loosened by the executioner fell over her shoulders and covered them as with a thick veil. Not a word was heard around, for even the hardened spectators were struck with reverence and astonishment by the saintly resignation and shrinking modesty of that young girl. Nay, tears were seen to roll over the bronzed and weather-beaten faces

of many a one amongst the fierce soldiers of the Czar.

"Have you nothing to say?" demanded the officer who presided at the execution of the sentence.

"Nothing, except to invoke a blessing on the head of that father for whom I willingly suffer."

A low, subdued murmur of admiration ran from rank to rank of the soldiers and the people. Several voices were heard crying—"pardon!" "pardon!" But the officer raised his sword, turning away his head as he did so; the drums were heard for a moment, but the next all was silence save the hissing sounds of the whip as it lashed and tore the naked shoulders of the heroic daughter of Bialewski. Though even at the tenth stroke her strength was seen to fail, and her head to sink languidly on her bosom, yet on and on went the fatal lash till the twenty-five had been given. The bleeding and now senseless body was then unbound from the post and taken back to the straw couch in the prison. A surgeon was brought, who, having washed and dressed the deep wounds inflicted by the whip, assured the spectators that the lady would live. After a little time the poor sufferer opened her eyes, and when consciousness returned she was never once heard to murmur, though the pain of her many wounds must have been excruciating.

About a month after, her strength being well

nigh restored, she was one morning summoned by the gaoler, (who had been her only nurse during her illness,) to join some other prisoners who were, he supposed, setting out for Siberia. She was then conducted to a large hall on the first floor where she found assembled about twenty convicts, all of the very first families of Poland. But, oh ! what mingled feelings of happiness and sorrow were hers when amongst them she recognized the noble form of her father, who received her in his arms, and tears streamed copiously from the eyes of both. The commissioners had not erred in their diabolical calculation : the terrible news of Rosa's punishment had flown like wild-fire through the city, and reached the Count in his obscure retreat. Overwhelmed with anguish, the heart-stricken father could no longer remain absent from his daughter for the sake of preserving a life which was now useless if he could not devote it to that heroic child. He hoped that by submitting himself, they would be banished together, and as they might be bound by the same chain, he could still protect his cherished darling even in exile and captivity, Thus it was that they met again at this sad moment, and yet so great was their joy that they could only express it by their tears.

"Oh my father!" said Rosa at length, as they ascended the vehicle which was to convey them from Warsaw and across the entire



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kingdom of Poland, "oh! my father! were Raphael but with us, we could forget all our sufferings."

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## CHAPTER XV.

IT is needless to follow the exiles on their journey; suffice it to say that these unfortunates had in or about nine hundred and fifty leagues to cross ere they could reach the dreary place of their destination. The journey took three months, and as it was commenced towards the middle of October, just when the frost sets in with severity, they had to undergo during the entire route the daily increasing rigor of a northern winter. At one time they were carried on wretched carts; then dragged along on a species of sledge or train without the slightest covering; then again walking on foot through frost and snow. Sometimes obliged to stop in some inhospitable desert, on account of the illness of some of their number—being never served but with the very coarsest food, and often harshly treated by the guard, it was truly miraculous that the poor exiles were able to bear up against such accumulated misery and privation, or that any of them lived to reach

the term of their unnatural journey. During all that dreary time the Count watched over the comfort of his daughter with the fondest and most unwearying solicitude—sustaining as best he might, her tottering steps, for notwithstanding all her high-souled courage, her frame was weak and enfeebled by suffering. His tender care was well seconded by his brethren in misfortune, who, forgetful of their own sufferings, contrived to obtain secretly from the charity of the people as they went along, many a little gift for their young fellow-traveller. Many a time, too, did one or other of them, although exhausted, and with torn and bleeding feet, help the Count to carry his daughter over some dangerous and toilsome path. But they deemed themselves well repaid when they heard the broken, yet still sweet voice of Rosa raised to heaven for them in grateful supplication, and they listened with swelling hearts as she spoke of that God who never forsakes the afflicted when they call on Him for aid, and whose mercy was with them there where human pity was dead and cold. “Our sufferings,” would she say, “may perchance wash away the sins of our people and avert from them the avenging hand; and then, think of the heavenly country where we shall all, if it be not our own fault, find rest and joy everlasting—where we shall be compensated an hundred—ay, a thousand fold for the miseries we now endure!” But Rosa did not content herself with kind and hopeful words,

but laid hold on every opportunity to minister to the comfort of her companions, many of whom owed their lives to her gentle and ceaseless attentions. Thus supported and encouraged by mutual charity, the band of prisoners reached Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia, where we shall leave them for the present.

We left Raphael a refugee on the Prussian territory, at the moment when, after months and months of weary anxiety, he had resolved on going in search of Rosa and her father. After the dispersion of the Polish army, and when many of his companions in arms had sought and found in France a safe and honorable refuge, Raphael had been retained by his wounds and their effects, in the little village of Culm, about ten leagues from the frontier, where he lodged in the house of a worthy Burgess, to whom he paid about fifty florins per month. There he was kindly and carefully nursed during his long and tedious illness, for he had fallen into the hands of good and compassionate people. But nothing could soothe his mind in its harrowing suspense, and as all communication with Poland was at an end, her population being as closely confined to their own soil as though locked in a vast tomb, so Raphael determined to make his way back into that desolate country, and make an attempt to set the Count and Rosa free, if happily he could find them. Having maturely considered his project, he made up his mind to speak to his

host on the subject, as he relied much on his friendship to favor his escape into Poland. As a refugee, he was an object of suspicion to the Prussian authorities, but latterly he had not been so closely watched, owing to his long illness and tedious recovery.

One evening, then, towards the middle of December, Master Albrecht, being seated near the fire smoking his long pipe with an air of luxurious meditation, while his comely wife sat at a little distance sewing, Raphael took occasion to broach the subject which ever filled his mind.

"I have news for you, my good sir," said he, "which will, I know, give pain to your kind heart! I am about to leave you."

"What! are you, too, bound for France?" cried Master Albrecht, laying his pipe beside his pot of beer so suddenly, and with such a force, that it broke in three pieces: seeing which the good burgess coolly added: "Ay! sure enough, the best of friends must part!"

"You are much nearer to your country while with us," observed Madame Albrecht, as, letting her work fall on her knee, she looked up with a saddened air—"and besides, I do not know that you are well enough yet to undertake so long a journey at this inclement season."

"My worthy friends!" said Raphael, "I am not going to France, for that would but remove me farther still from those ties which alone bind me to this world. but I mean to return to



Poland, to ascertain whether those I love are living or dead, and if I find them, I shall live or die with them."

"To Poland, did you say?" exclaimed Master Albrecht, with a significant glance at his wife, as though urging her to be silent; "surely you could not be mad enough to think of such a step, which could only end in your own destruction."

"Only listen, Master Albrecht, to what I have to say, and your generous heart will acknowledge that I am right. I have left behind in that unhappy land a lovely and a noble bride — one who, from the innumerable virtues and graces of her mind would adorn the throne of a monarch. Yet I left her at the very moment when she had become mine by every sacred tie — when I had sworn to love and cherish her forever. Her father, my best friend, is pursued by the sleepless vigilance of the Russians, and must be racked with apprehension for the desolate condition of his only child. Then I have in Lithuania a grandmother who has been to me all that the fondest parent could have been, and whom I regard with even more than filial affection. I assure you, my kind friends, that I say but little when I assert that the safety of these three persons is dearer to me than my own existence, and you will allow that if there be even one poor chance of saving any of them, I am imperatively bound to try it. — Consider that, even while I speak to you, they may be wandering about without a shelter from

the frozen air, incessantly menaced by a punishment awarded to the vilest criminals!— and can I, then, remain here in peace and comfort? — oh no — no. Were I not urged on by the strongest affections of my heart, even shame itself would compel me to seek them in their danger and in their misery!”

“ But whither will you go then ? ” demanded Albrecht, visibly affected by Raphael’s agitation — have you formed any plan — or have you any particular place in view ? ” And as he spoke this he ever and anon exchanged a meaning glance with his wife.

“ I shall go first to Warsaw,” returned Raphael.

“ The deuce you will ? — and in a coach, I suppose, provided with a passport setting forth in due form your name, rank, age and profession ! Just Heaven ! my young friend, you speak like anything but a man of sense. To Warsaw, forsooth ! — why that would be leaping into the very jaws of the wolf. And what if you should not find in Warsaw the friends for whom you are so venturesome, eh ? ”

“ Why, then, I shall journey on, wherever hope will lead me.”

“ And suppose you were told that your friends are in a place where no effort of yours can obtain access—a place, in short, where you cannot find them ? ”

“ The wide world contains no such spot ! ” cried Raphael with unwonted vehemence. “ But

is it possible that you know anything of them? Speak—speak, I implore you!”

“Yes, my good young friend,” replied Master Albrecht with solemn gravity, and again throwing a glance on his wife which seemed to say: “Since he will have it, why needs must.”

“Yes, I have long known the retreat of your friends, and it is such that I hesitate in making it known to you.”

“In mercy, tell me at once!”

“Well, then—it is Siberia!”

“Siberia! oh righteous God! what a destiny!” cried Raphael, and a sudden chillness benumbed his mind and body, so that for some time he could not even speak.

Without appearing to notice his overwhelming grief, Master Albrecht went on: “It is now almost three months since we learned from the public journals that Count Bialewski and his daughter, with several other noble Poles, had been banished to Siberia, I believe to the neighborhood of Tobolsk. You must acknowledge, then, my young friend, that no human power can draw them thence—God alone can do that, and let us beg of Him that He may soften the heart of the Czar in their favor!”

“There, then, will I go,” said Raphael, suddenly breaking silence, “and if I cannot snatch them from their wretched fate, I can at least share it with them.”

“As far as sharing their fate goes,” observed Albrecht phlegmatically, “why the thing is easy

enough if you can only make up your mind to venture into those dreary deserts."

"But might you not serve those you love much more effectually," said Madam Albrecht, "by remaining here, and engaging some of those who have influence at Court to intercede with the Emperor for their pardon?"

"No, no," replied Raphael, almost impatiently, "it would take years and years to soften that proud, stony heart, and in the meantime they might have sunk under their misery. The matter is just this—I have made up my mind to set out without delay, and I rely on your friendly aid, Master Albrecht, in facilitating my escape."

"I will do all I can for you, but I would rather serve you in some other way."

Raphael passed two weeks more in preparations for his journey, and above all in studying the regions through which he had to pass: he consulted all the best maps, and marked out his line of travel almost day by day. He hoped that in the disguise of a peasant he could make his way without attracting any attention, from stage to stage and from village to village to the confines of Russia in Europe. The excessive temerity of this project was its only chance of success, for no one could have supposed that an outlaw once escaped, would voluntarily throw himself again into danger, by venturing back into the country where discovery hung over him at every step.



“Well, so let it e’en be,” said Master Albrecht, “and I trust your exceeding audacity will be your safeguard, for you judge well in taking it for granted that no one would suspect you of going with open eyes into the clutches of the enemy. You will probably reach Siberia—that I admit—but how will you get out of it with your companions?”

“Oh! I do not pretend to foresee so far into the future,” replied Raphael with a smile; “when once we are together, we can arrange our plans and act as opportunity will permit.”

Raphael then made arrangements with Albrecht touching the jewels and bank bills confided to him by Count Bialewski, in anticipation of what had since been too fully realised. Three-fourths of the whole he left in the hands of his host until such times as himself or some one for him could come to reclaim it. For himself he barely took what he could secrete about his person, being no more than he deemed absolutely necessary for his own wants and the execution of his projects. The question now was how to get over the frontier, and that was no slight difficulty: there was no chance of passing into Poland unnoticed, so watchful were the Russians all along the line, albeit that they kept a closer eye to those who went out, having little suspicion that any of those who once got safe out, would covet going in again.—Some other plan, then, must be tried, and only two suggested themselves. One of these was to pro-

cure a passport for Raphael under a fictitious name: but here were found so many difficulties that the idea was given up in despair; and Raphael was fairly at a loss when worthy Master Albrecht came out with his expedient. Having remarked that Raphael spoke German with the utmost fluency, he proposed to him to enter Poland as the travelling agent of a commercial house in Culm, belonging to the fur trade, by which means he could traverse all Russia without let or hindrance, and Siberia as well.—Raphael willingly accepted this proposal, and was furnished with letters of instruction from the worthy fur-merchant, who was an intimate friend of Master Albrecht. He then passed some days in making himself acquainted with the details of that business (so as to act his part as well as possible.) and in this he found but little difficulty, owing to his previous knowledge of natural history.

Having all his preliminaries satisfactorily arranged, Raphael took leave of Master Albrecht and his worthy help-mate, not without giving them the most substantial marks of his gratitude, and set out with all possible despatch for the frontier. Thanks to his good German, and his pacific guise, he was permitted to pass without molestation. How, indeed, could any one have imagined that one whose very life was at stake could wear so calm an aspect, and demean himself so quietly when standing in the presence of his mortal foe? He traversed,

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almost without stopping, the ancient kingdom of Poland (kingdom alas! no more!) and bent his course to Lithuania. There, more than ever, it behoved him to make no delay, for there he was peculiarly exposed to the danger of being recognised. Moreover, he gathered from the conversation in an inn that the Russian commander had received full power to institute military commissions anywhere within the Lithuanian districts, to take summary cognisance of all who might be suspected of having been engaged in the late insurrection, and to give sentence of banishment, confiscation, the labor of the mines, or even of death. Terror and dismay were seen on every face, for a hand of iron smote every heart. None could deem themselves secure, and there was not a single family that did not tremble for a father, a son, or a husband. Wealthy families and individuals were suddenly stripped of everything they possessed, by confiscation, and saw themselves reduced to abject poverty. A prince was condemned by the remorseless conqueror, to travel on foot to his Siberian exile. Neither were the lower ranks spared, for all the Lithuanian soldiers and non-commissioned officers were transported to the farthest provinces of the vast Russian empire, with no hope of ever again beholding the heart-wrung mourners whom they left behind.—Religion itself, the divine solace of the wretched and the sorrowful was persecuted with renewed violence, and treated with the most insulting contempt. Yet the catalogue

of horrors ended not even there, for something yet remained for that most wretched people,—something before unheard of in the annals of oppression. Very soon there came from St. Petersburg the following order, bearing date the 21st November, 1831:—

“His Imperial Majesty has graciously vouchsafed to publish a supreme order for the removal of five thousand Polish gentlemen with their families from the province of Podolia, to the steppes of the Tresor, said families to be stationed immediately within the line or in the district of Causasus, so that they may be afterwards enrolled in our military service. In making this selection, the following conditions must be observed: firstly, those are to be taken who, having been banished for participating in the last rebellion, are returned from exile, their appointed time being expired; those also who have been included in the third class of criminals, and have consequently received His Majesty's gracious pardon. Secondly, all those whose manner of living renders them liable to be suspected by the local authorities. Furthermore, your Excellency will employ all necessary means (without publishing or making known the particular nature of this order) to register the names of all those families on whom you may have pitched, so that you can immediately put this decree into execution, according to the particular instructions hereafter to be transmitted to you.”



Another dispatch added :

“ His Majesty, in confirming the rules to be observed, has graciously written with his own hand what follows:—These rules and regulations apply not only to Podolia, but to all the western governments: Wilna, Grodno, Vitepsk, Bialistok, Mink, Vothynia and Ryow, which will make in all forty-five thousand families. Those of gentle birth, who have no landed property, no revenues, nor fixed occupation, who live idly and often change their places of abode, shall be removed to the line of Caucasus, and shall be enrolled in the Cossack regiments, and as henceforward they shall be regarded as Cossacks they are to have no sort of communication with the other colonies of Polish gentlemen. To conclude, if these Poles show any reluctance to emigrate as we have ordered, we hereby give your Excellency full power, to coerce them to compliance.”

This truly savage system of wholesale banishment was already commenced, twelve hundred families having been torn from their ancestral homes in Podolia alone. So deep and universal, however, was the detestation with which the people beheld this new atrocity, that the Russian authorities were obliged to suspend its further execution for a time, keeping it always in view, and laying hold of every pretext to carry on by stealth and by indirect means that which they feared to do openly. Such was the aspect of affairs when Raphael once more enter-

ed his native province. At every step his ears were assailed by the recital of these horrors, mingled with groans, and sighs, and lamentations which pierced his very heart. Yet, not all the danger of the undertaking could prevent him from going in person to his own home to see how it fared with his beloved and revered parent. He was, nevertheless, obliged by a violent snow-storm to stop a few days in the first Lithuanian village. As he entered the little town he was struck by even an unusual display of military strength; strong parties of soldiers being stationed at the gates and all the openings. Yet, regardless of all this, and defying the orders of the police, the people were gathered together in the streets, and appeared under the influence of one of those fits of passion where all sense of fear is extinguished. Raphael hastened to inquire of the landlady the cause of this violent outburst of popular feeling.

“Oh sir!” she replied, with a sort of a fierceness, borrowed from the occasion, and throwing away, as if in disdain, all that reserve which recent events had forced the people to observe towards strangers—“Oh sir! it is a thing which outrages both heaven and earth—they want to rob us of our children—that they do!”

## CHAPTER XVI.

“To rob ye of your children!” cried Raphael  
“is it possible?”

“It is no wonder, sir, that you can scarcely believe it; but what I tell you is true for that, for they are now trying so execute an order sent by the Emperor to that effect. Oh! surely these Russians have no heart!”

As she spoke thus, the poor woman, who was, still young and pretty, kept looking around with a wild and restless glance; then advancing to the door she looked out with a haggard stare on the increasing tumult in the street.

“Have you reason to fear for your own family?” inquired Raphael.

“Alas! I am the most unfortunate of human beings!” cried the poor woman, bursting into tears. “Only think, sir, at the close of our last troubles they tore away my husband, because he had done his duty, and fought for poor Poland. These eyes saw him dragged away in chains like a vile criminal, without a hope of seeing him again in this life, while I was left, in a state bordering on ruin, with one poor child of about five years old. Well! all that, it seems, is not enough, for the emperor now decrees that all our children, who are thus left orphans, are to

be gathered up by his agents and sent off to the depth of that hateful Russia, there to be brought up as his subjects. Yet this man — this emperor — has the assurance to give himself airs of kindness and humanity! Just think of that — and he taking from us our poor little helpless children, whom he has already deprived of their fathers! — As they have no fathers, he has the impudence to say, that he will be a father to them! But, oh God! sir, what will become of their poor mothers? — oh! would that my eyes were closed in death before they look on such a sight!!

“Take courage madam! for things may not be as bad as you seem to apprehend. Surely the Imperial order must be exaggerated in report, for though I know very well that the Russians will eagerly snap up all such children as are really orphans, and send them to people their vast deserts, yet they must respect the rights of families.”

“They will respect nothing, sir — nothing!” replied the landlady, with increasing agitation, “that I know full well, for I have seen them at work all yesterday and to-day.”

And she hastened away from Raphael, as though his having expressed a doubt of the barbarity of the Russians had made him suspicious in her eyes. For some minutes longer she remained gazing out with a terrified countenance on the stormy scene without, but suddenly running back into the house, she cried out in accents of horror.



“Here they come—unhappy I!—here they are!” and so saying, she darted up the stairs to the chamber where her boy lay sleeping in his little bed. Raphael and some of the servants of the hotel hastened to the door to see what was going on without. They were soon obliged to retreat, however, for a party of police, and another of soldiers, quickly entered the house.

“Where is the mistress of the house?” demanded the officer in command. The servants pointed to the staircase, whereupon the agents ascended without another word of inquiry, as though ashamed of their odious employment, and anxious to get through with it as soon as possible. Soon after the most piercing screams were heard from above, and in an instant the young woman was seen dragged down the stairs by the police, with her child clasped convulsively in her arms.

“No! no!” she cried, “you may kill me if you will, but you shall not deprive me of my child! I am his mother—he is mine, and your emperor has nothing to do with him. It is for me, who has given him birth and fed him from my breast, to bring him up as I wish and as I best can. You will not leave your mother, my child, will you? Leave his mother!—why, he would die, poor innocent, without a mother’s care! Oh! sirs—good gentlemen! have mercy on me, and leave me my only child—see, I kneel to you—oh! do not take him from me!”

And the wretched suppliant knelt on the

snowy ground, with the tears streaming from her eyes, and her face bowed almost to the earth. Her boy terrified, though he knew not why, nestled close in her arms.

“Come, come, Madame! we must put an end to this! give me the child at once!” said the officer quickly, evidently desirous of terminating a scene of which he was heartily ashamed. Approaching the poor mother, he tried to force the child from her arms: at first she struggled with inconceivable energy, but seeing that several others of his people came forward to assist him, and being herself almost exhausted:

“Wait—wait a moment,” she cried, with a phrenzied air, “just wait till I bid him farewell!” And with wild, delirious gestures, she strained him in her arms—closer and closer still, till the child became livid and motionless, then she threw him towards those who waited for him—while they, in their turn, stood aghast and horrified.

“Butchers!” cried the unhappy woman, with maniac fury, “there he is! you may now take him if you will; there he is!”

A cry of horror escaped from every mouth, and each spectator stood motionless before that hideous sight. But the unfortunate woman speedily regained her senses, and as though seeing for the first time, the inanimate form of her child, she caught it in her arms, and pressed it tenderly to her heart with the vain hope of re-

storing it to life and warmth, crying out "My child—my poor, poor child! they have killed my son!"

When recovered from their first stupor of horror and surprise, the police drew away the ill-fated mother, who died a few days after in an hospital, incessantly repeating while life remained, "My child! they have murdered my child!"

Raphael glided away as soon as the weather would at all permit, from scenes which he could not long have witnessed without betraying his feelings. He was, moreover, fearfully anxious on account of his grand-mother, and longed to know how it had fared with her amid this universal desolation. Though the weather was still very severe he set out at once, and after a tedious journey, he arrived at the close of day within half a league of his own castle. Having left his sledge at an inn on the road-side, saying that business called him for a few days to the interior of the country, he set out on foot, and just as the last gleam of daylight faded from the earth he stood at the entrance of the well-known avenue which led to the castle. The gate lay open, and he entered with a sinking heart for all around bore the traces of devastation and neglect. Large fragments of ruins blocked up the passage; the long grass grew on the pathways; no sound was heard, nor no light was visible in the castle, and all was dark and silent as the grave. Raphael felt the silence oppressive and he ventured to call aloud, but

no one answered—no voice was heard in reply, not even that of his faithful watch-dogs. He approached, and entered by one of the doors which lay wide open, but the place was empty and desolate, and after grouping his way through the old familiar halls and chambers, he became fearfully impressed with a sense of awe and loneliness. The floors were everywhere covered with shattered and broken furniture—the drapery of the windows waved to and fro in tatters in the cold night wind, while heaps of straw were spread in the larger apartments, and the hearths were strewn with crockery, and dirty, broken kettles, giving woeful evidence that the place had been occupied as a temporary barrack.

“Alas! the Russians have been here!” murmured Raphael, mournfully, “but what have the barbarians done with my dear grandmother—can they have poured out their vengeance on her noble and venerable head?” Descending to the court-yard, he bent his steps towards a neighboring farm-house, whose inmates had ever been faithfully devoted to his family, and where he hoped to learn something of that which yet he dreaded to hear. It was dark when he knocked at the door, and was admitted by the farmer himself.

“Can you shelter a traveller for the night?” demanded Raphael.

“Come in, sir” replied the peasant, respectfully; “it is only the cold that makes us keep the door shut, for we make it a rule to leave it



open for any one who stands in need of supper or bed."

Raphael entered the house without making himself known, and was shown to a seat near a cheerful fire, where the mistress of the family was preparing supper. The good man took his seat in the opposite corner, and waited in respectful silence for his guest to open the conversation.

"I think," said Raphael, in a disguised voice, "that when I was last in this neighborhood the castle hard by was inhabited—indeed, I had calculated to call there now on business. Can you tell me what is become of the venerable lady who lived there, I think, with her grandson?"

The honest peasant changed countenance, and it was easy to see that the subject was a painful one to him. "Our good lady," said he, with deep feeling, "is gone to a better world than this, to reap the reward of her virtues!"

"What! is she dead?" cried Raphael.

"Yes, dead, master! and not of old age, neither!"

"Great God, then, how did she die?—what happened to her?" said Raphael again, with uncontrollable emotion.

"If you were acquainted with that noble lady," replied the farmer, "you may have known the extent of her courage. Well! the Russians having taken possession of her castle, she protested against such injustice, and asked by what

right they took up their quarters in her dwelling. 'Because,' was the reply, 'the government wants to punish your grandson, who is at this moment pursued as a traitor.' The high-spirited lady instantly replied, that it was she who had brought up her grandson, and had instilled into his mind those patriotic sentiments which every Polish noble ought to cherish. This confession drew upon her all the fury of the Russians, who first gave her up to the punishment of the *knout*, and then threw her out upon the highway more dead than alive, where she soon after expired in the arms of her faithful servants, before they had time to seek an asylum for her."

"God of mercy!" cried Raphael, with a shudder, "what revolting cruelty!—not even extreme old age could shield her from their brutal vengeance! they had no pity on her hoary locks!"

"Neither hoary locks nor flaxen ringlets are any passport with them," replied the worthy farmer—"they make no distinction, all are alike. Will you believe it, sir, that three months ago, or thereabout, we saw a neighboring lord, the Count Bialewski, carried past here with his lovely daughter, on their way to that infernal Siberia? But behold you—even worse than that—the sweet young lady, who is more of an angel than a woman, I'll swear—had publicly suffered in Warsaw before they left it, the horrible punishment of the *knout*. Yes, truly,

the wretches had the heart to mangle her delicate flesh with their dreadful lash — did you ever hear of such atrocity in your life, sir, as we see in these days of ours ? ”

The words died on the quivering lips of Raphael, and the tears which before he could scarcely repress, now burst from his eyes. The farmer, surprised by his strange emotion, fixed an enquiring eye on his face.

“ My good friend,” said Raphael, making a strong effort to speak composedly, “ I knew all these of whom you speak — yes, well I knew them — be not, then, surprised to see these tears which I cannot repress. It is useless now to tell you who I am, for the knowledge of my name might hereafter bring you into trouble, and even danger, should I myself be discovered.”

He then obtained an account from the peasant of all that he heard concerning Rosa and her father, and though the whole amounted but to some rumors which had flown about the country, it was yet sufficient to rend his very heart.

“ Yes, now,” said the farmer, as he concluded his recital, “ we see nothing around us but desolation — the rich and the poor are alike the objects of Russian vengeance. They trample us under foot and oppress us in every way they can think of, and worse than all, they would force us to give up our holy religion, the old faith of our fathers. In our neighborhood here, they have shut up the monastery which was a

school for several parishes, and a hospital for the sick and diseased of all the country round. They are threatening us with Russian priests, too, and just now, I am told, one of them is being forced on the people of Count Bialewski's domains."

"Is the Abbe Choradzo still in that parish?" broke in Raphael, as a new source of anxiety opened on his mind.

"Yes, I dare say he is, but we have heard it said that his church is to be closed forthwith, because he preaches up firmness and fortitude to his people, and gives an example of pious zeal to all the district."

"Alas! what a trying situation for that excellent priest," said Raphael, "but as you seem to think that he is still living, I must go and see him, ere yet he falls a victim to the blind fury of the oppressor. Are the roads which leads to Bialewski's castle still open to travellers?"

"Oh yes, sir," replied the farmer, "you can easily go there, if you know the country well enough to find your way."

"Well, then, will you be kind enough to awake me at three o'clock in the morning, that I may go to ask a last blessing from the worthy priest, before he is called to receive his crown of martyrdom? Good night, my kind friends."

Raphael then entered an inner chamber, and threw himself on the bed which had been prepared for him, but he could not sleep. Ever



before his eyes was the harrowing picture of his dear, his venerated parent, expiring under the ruthless blows of the Russians, and the savage executioner mangling with his ponderous lash the delicate form of his Rosa—his young bride. Thus passed away the tedious hours of night, and just at the moment when his wearied eyes were closing in a broken slumber, he was aroused by the voice of his host telling him that the appointed hour was come. In a few minutes Raphael was ready to set out, and on taking leave of his kind entertainers, he would amply have rewarded them for their trouble, but his offer was firmly declined; nothing could induce the worthy farmer or his wife to accept even the smallest reward.

“Well, then,” said Raphael, as he warmly shook hands with his host, “I must prove my gratitude in some way, and since you will not receive money, I must e’en give you my confidence. I am Raphael Ubinski, the grandson of your lamented lady—surely you remember me?”

“My God!” cried the farmer, literally petrified with astonishment, “how is it that I have failed to recognise your lordship! But if you will have the goodness to wait a moment, my lord, I will attend you on your journey—it is my duty to do so!”

“Not so,” returned Raphael promptly; “I will not have you leave your home merely to follow me—no, no—stay where you are, and

farewell till we meet again." And he moved away with a light and rapid step. A clear moonlight guided his way, and as he knew every turn and short-cut across the country, the day was but just dawning when he came in sight of the hamlet which lay around the castle of Bialewski. The bell of the parish church was tolling, as though for a funeral service, and though it was neither Sunday nor holyday, the church stood open, and was lighted up as if for some solemn service, while the villagers and country people were seen thronging in from every side. Raphael knocked at the door of the presbytery, and the priest himself appeared:

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" he inquired, as his eye fell on the supposed stranger.

The good vicar looked grave, and his usually calm countenance was much disturbed, so that Raphael saw there must be something extraordinary going forward, and that he had no time to lose.

"Why, reverend father!" said he, "can it be that you do not recognise one of your old acquaintances—Raphael Ubinski?"

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed the priest in astonishment, "is it possible that you are here? Surely you do not know the danger to which you expose yourself?"

"Nay, I should think there is but little chance of my being discovered," returned Raphael, "when even you did not know me!"

“But what has induced you to venture back amongst us, my young friend?”

Raphael gave him a rapid sketch of all that had passed since he had quitted Lithuania with the Count and his children—how they had been separated by the tide of events, and how he had resolved to brave every danger in order to snatch those beloved ones from exile, if God would permit him so to do.

“Alas, yes!” said the pastor, with a deep sigh, “their mournful fate has been long known to me; and, notwithstanding the greatness and the multiplicity of the obstacles which lie in your way, I do hope that God in his great mercy will enable you to carry out your generous intentions. Yet, I cannot but regret that you have shown yourself here, for, alas! the consequences may be fatal to you!”

“I was too near you,” said Raphael, with a mournful smile, “not to venture a little for the pleasure of seeing you. But tell me, I pray you, what is going on here, that I see you all astir so early, and such a bustle of preparation among the people?”

“We also have our trouble,” said the vicar, in a tone of deep sadness, “and to-day they are to reach their height; but though the hour of trial year, fiery trial be come, I trust that God will sustain us. Since the Russians have latterly taken possession of the country, there is scarcely any species of insult and annoyance but we have undergone. Of course, the church

property was at once confiscated, for spoliation ever goes before persecution; but now they begin to thirst for our blood. They have gradually suppressed many of our churches, and would fetter the clergy of those which remain unclosed, by obliging us to mutilate and alter the unchangeable liturgy and doctrines of the church. We are forbid to keep or open schools; forbidden to receive converts, or to preach the word of God—nay, we have been a thousand times prevented from administering the sacraments to our poor people; in short, for several months past we have been compelled to witness the increasing encroachments of heresy, carried out and maintained by violence. And how many holy priests have protested against these odious encroachments, even till their voice was silenced by the fatal stroke—while many, many others of our brethren have been transported to the Siberian deserts, that vast and dreary sepulchre, wherein the Czar hopes to stifle the cries and groans of his victims. Our turn is at length come. I have received orders to cease at once the celebration of the divine mysteries—to shut up my church, and give up the key to a Russian priest, renouncing for ever the functions of my ministry. I am now about to celebrate Mass for the last time, and to address some words of consolation and encouragement to my beloved flock, that may help to strengthen them in their faith, and in their resolution to die rather than give up one article thereof.



For myself, I go to offer up my life in defence of the rights of our holy church."

"I shall go with you," said Raphael, moved even to tears by the noble courage of the man of God.

"Nay, my dear Raphael!" answered the priest, as he pressed the hand of the generous young man, "nay, it is your duty to preserve your life for the sake of your friends. And I shall have to wait some time in the church, so you had better not come."

Yet Raphael did go, for he would not be refused, and having entered the church with the priest, he stationed himself in the shade of a pillar, so as to escape attention, if that were possible. As to the people who thronged every corner of the sacred edifice, they were far too much intent on their own sad thoughts, and absorbed in the fervor of their devotion to pay any attention to a stranger whose appearance was studiously plain and unassuming. The priest soon appeared in the sanctuary, and the holy sacrifice was offered up in solemn silence, broken only by the sighs and low murmured wailings of the faithful. It was the last time that they were to assemble in that dear and venerable temple, erected by the zeal and piety of their fathers, and which it had been their own delight to adorn by every little sacrifice they could make. Never again might they gather around that altar where they had so often received the bread of angels. At the moment of the communion the whole people went forward, as one individual, and with the most affecting

tenderness of devotion, received the blessed sacrament—the nourishment and support of their souls. Such was the divine specific which exalted above all human fear the martyrs of the early days, and the Church offers it not with less confidence to her children when eighteen centuries have proved its unfailing efficacy in nerving the souls of her children for the dread battle with the enemy of salvation. The mass being ended, the priest once more took his place in the pulpit, and standing erect, his face bearing the impress of radiant hope and firm confidence, he addressed his people for the last time:

“Be not surprised, my dear brethren, if I thus, in defiance of an unjust prohibition, appear again before you, to repeat once and again, while opportunity remains to me, the glorious truths of our holy religion! You know, nevertheless, that I have ever exhorted you to respect the laws and the commands of your rulers, preferring peace and order to all things else. Now it becomes my duty to speak far otherwise, and to remind you that the laws of man must necessarily be subservient to those of God. It is true we must ‘render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,’ but at the same time we must render ‘to God the things that are God’s.’ It is God, then, who has invested me with my authority, saying unto me, ‘Go teach all nations, instructing them in all things, whatever I have commanded you.’ Here, then, has Cæsar no power—I must speak, since God has commanded me, even though it be at the expense

of my life. Oh, brethren! how could I remain a 'dumb dog' when so many dangers hang over the fold, heavier still than those which have come upon it. It has long been manifest to us that they are resolved on destroying our faith—that their object is to separate us from that Church beyond whose pale there is only discord and uncertainty. Yes, they would make ye apostates as well as slaves. Hitherto they have tried but stratagem and bribery, and these have ye nobly resisted. But now they resort to force, to open violence, and perhaps before another hour passes, you will see a heretic priest, escorted by soldiers (oh, my God! is it thus that truth would spread her doctrines?) come here to profane our temple and defile our sacred altar with his unholy ministry. He will call upon you in the name of the Emperor, to adopt his belief, and will menace you, under the same high authority, with the most dreadful punishment, in case you resist. Oh, my children! will not your unanimous answer be, 'we must obey God rather than man?' and together we will yield up our lives in proof of our faith in God, and of our devotion to the Church by him established on earth. Let us shrink from no sacrifice that may contribute to preserve to this unhappy country the pure light of that Gospel which is to save the world. Yes, the entire world, and not any particular nation or nations. Should they at any time put forth the pretext of nationality when urging you to embrace a faith which is confined, we may say, to

their own empire, remember that the question is not to respect and obey the divine laws, or to increase the glory of God, but to favor the selfish views of princes and statesmen. Truth is one and indivisible—it is the same for the Russian as for the Italian; and since all must recognise the necessity of a religion which accurately defines and firmly maintains the relations existing between man and his Creator, so that religion, to be true, must be one and universal—vivifying all nations by her sacred and immutable doctrines, even as the sun gives life to the world by his incorruptible rays. For the rest, ‘the tree is known by the fruits’—your holy religion is the same in all parts of the world; her means of conversion are persuasion and tenderness; her true missionaries are never sparing of their own blood, but never shed that of others, and everywhere she has left imperishable monuments of her greatness and of her charity. Error, on the contrary, has but two means of subduing souls, and each of them more detestable than the other: that is to say, oppression and corruption. Its course is marked by ruin and wretchedness, and it can only retain mankind in its toils by plunging them into the darkness of ignorance, and by permitting them to gratify their most violent passions. But why, you will ask, does Providence so often permit truth to be led captive in the chains of error? It is that we may learn its full value, and above all that we may become worthy of its inestimable blessings. When God wished



to establish his Church, he purified the pagan world by the fire of persecution; and now, when that Church requires purification from the sins of her people, it is still persecution that he raises up to effect his end. Who may dare deny that we have drawn down upon ourselves these severe chastisements? We have suffered the truth to be darkened and well nigh corrupted amongst us; we have too long rejected the most energetic means of safety and preservation; we have, in a thousand instances, tampered with error; can we, therefore, be astonished if God unchains the strong winds of his wrath to separate the chaff from the grain? Let us, then, brethren, endeavor to propitiate the avenger of sin by the most unlimited devotion; let us manifest before our persecutors the zeal and the courage of the primitive Christians, confessing our faith amid privations and even torments, so that bearing our cross willingly, and even joyfully, we may ensure a final triumph to the cause of truth and righteousness. Let us above all, supplicate the great and good God that his sanctifying grace may sustain us under every trial and every torture, even, to the last moment of our lives. It is almost certain that I now address you for the last time; preserve then my last words as the last bequest of a father who will never forget his children. If I am sent from you into exile, you shall ever live in my heart; and if I am to be slaughtered, as so many of my brethren have been, then I can serve you more effectually, before the throne of the Most High!"

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE prayers were not yet ended when some boys who had been on the watch, rushed into the church, crying out: "The Russians are coming!—here they are just at hand!"

Upon this, all arose from their knees with an affrighted air, yet no one attempted to fly. "My friends," said the vicar, "have courage, I beseech you. Here we must await them—they demand of us the abandonment of our faith, let us show them, then, by our firmness and fortitude, how deeply engraven it is on our hearts. Let us continue our prayers and then commence a hymn, for God hears us and will bless our devotion to him!"

Immediately the suspended prayers were resumed in a loud, clear voice, when the priest rapidly approached Raphael and said to him: "Retire now, I entreat you! You belong not to this parish—your example is not required here, and other duties summon you away."

"Nay, it may be necessary that I should remain to witness the sequel," replied Raphael, "suffer me, therefore, to keep my place!"

"No—no," returned the priest with emphasis, "you, too, have a pious task to perform, and I cannot consent that you should now throw away your life, where it cannot be of the least

use to me or my people. Come, follow me!" Raphael could no longer resist, so he suffered the priest to draw him away through the sanctuary, and in obedience to the direction of his finger he crossed the cemetery into the fields. There was little time for parting salutations, and in a minute or two the pastor was again kneeling in the midst of his flock.

A few minutes passed away in fearful expectation, and then the loud roll of the Russian drums without the church, rose high above the voice of prayer within. Very soon after, a Russian priest made his appearance, accompanied by several officers and a magistrate, being all members of a commission established by the Emperor for the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, while beyond in the porch was seen a line of glittering bayonets. The president of the ecclesiastical commission (he was a colonel in the imperial army) then advanced to the vicar, and pointing to the Russian priest he said in an imperious tone:

"Sir, His Majesty has given you a successor, to whom you will instantly give up the keys of this church, and follow us to give an account of your conduct, for this is a strange way of executing the orders you have received. You are perfectly aware that you were commanded to close your church, and to abstain from all religious manifestations in this parish until your successor had arrived."

"My conscience, sir, forbade me to obey

these orders," returned the vicar calmly, "and enjoined me moreover, to exercise the functions of my office till the last moment!"

"How?—do you mean to say that your conscience prompted you to disobey the Emperor?" demanded the interrogator, articulating every word with so strong an emphasis, as though he could not believe such a thing possible, "why, that is madness, still more than blasphemy! We shall speedily apply a remedy to your disease, my good man! For the present, give up the keys of the church, I tell you again, and consider yourself as a prisoner!"

"I cannot abandon the temple of the Lord to an enemy of his holy law!" replied the priest, raising his voice so as to encourage by his example his terrified people. "Violence and impiety may profane this church, but never shall I acknowledge as my successor a man who brings hither only sacrilege and imposture!"

"Is it thus you receive the Emperor's commands?" thundered out the colonel, his face livid with rage.

"It is thus I acquit myself of my duty to God!"

"Carry off this reprobate," roared the colonel, "and scourge him till the blood runs from him in streams."

The soldiers quickly advanced to seize the vicar, who made a sign that he was willing to follow them; and then turning towards his people, who pressed around him with tears and



lamentations: "My children!" said he, in a voice which touched every heart, "be firm and courageous on behalf of your faith, and never lose sight of the precept, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but unto God the things that are God's."

"Silence, sirrah!" cried the colonel sternly, "and march on the instant—we shall see who is master here! Remove him."

No sooner had the priest been dragged from the church than the officer turned to the afflicted congregation, and made a haughty gesture commanding them to listen.

"Good people," said he, "they would abuse your credulity by preaching up revolt and disobedience. You well know how great was your crime in taking up arms against your sovereign, and had reason to tremble for the punishment of your offense. Yet his gracious majesty, in the plentitude of his goodness, will not only overlook your rebellion, but wishes even to admit you amongst his most faithful subjects. Hence it is that we remove from you an infatuated priest whose seditious doctrines would draw down ruin upon you, and give you in his place one who enjoys the Emperor's confidence, and who will instruct you in your duties to that august sovereign. I expect your cheerful submission."

A mournful silence was the only reply, and the Russian priest stepped forward to say something for himself. "Dear children," said he,

in smooth accents, "I am exceedingly happy to see you all assembled around me, as it affords me a precious opportunity to make known to you the sacred mission confided to me. Be not alarmed; I have no other code than the Gospel, and this I will expound to you in a manner that will, I am sure, give you entire satisfaction. By listening to my advice you shall never have cause to fear those chastisements and torments wherewith rebellion is punished. Of that you may rest assured, so we shall now proceed with a trifling ceremony which will terminate this first meeting. Each one as he leaves the church will sign this paper which I hold in my hand, and which relates solely to the magnanimous will of the Emperor. After that you will all be regarded as faithful and obedient subjects."

"Whatever else we may be, we are and will remain Catholics, with God's assistance!" returned the Poles with one voice.

"No exclamations there—be silent!" cried the colonel as drawing his sword, he accompanied the Russian priest to the door. A guard of soldiers quickly appeared and led the people one after the other to the presence of the commissioners. The first who was brought up refused to sign the paper, saying, "I am, and will be a Catholic!"

"But, my friend, you cannot as such be a faithful subject of the Emperor!"

“Remember,” added the colonel, “that your life is at stake.”

“I do remember,” said the peasant with a resolute air,—“I know that I have but once to die!”

“Yes, but there are many ways of dying,” interposed the priest, who yearned for the honor of a conversion, “and why would you knowingly expose yourself to the most rigorous torments?”

“Suffering and dying for God’s sake, I shall be well repaid in eternity!”

“Enough!” cried the colonel, “to the knout with this wretch!”

The sentence was forthwith executed, yet the victim endured his sufferings without a single complaint. Whilst the first was undergoing the torture several others were examined, but nothing could be made of them, and they were successively given up to the fury of the executioners. In order to spare the recital of these atrocities, all too sadly attested by history, let it suffice to say that the entire parish, men, women and children, were that day mangled and torn with the whip. Even the priest himself, in a phrenzy of wrath, was seen to lay hold on the knout, and since he could not seduce the people from their faith, he lashed them with vengeful fury till their blood streamed on the pavement. About a hundred of the principal inhabitants were loaded with chains and conveyed to the nearest jail, where, however, they

could not be received, as it was already filled with victims from other parishes. They were then huddled together in damp, cold hovels, like so many beasts of burden. A short time after, having been again cruelly punished, they were all restored to liberty, as the authorities found it impossible to give even the smallest allowance of food to the vast multitudes who filled their dungeons.

Meanwhile, Raphael had entered on his perilous journey through Russia proper, and in proportion as he moved farther away from those provinces which had been the theatre of the late revolution, he found the country more tranquil and less disturbed. Being furnished with a regular passport he journeyed along without any annoyance, as every one took him for a harmless traveller, and none dreamed of suspecting him of having any other object in view than that which he professed to have. Yet as he drew near the goal of his pilgrimage he found that a thousand dark presentiments sprang up to disturb his mind. Calculating on the data in his possession he knew that Rosa and her father must have been already three months or thereabouts in their dreary exile. Even if Rosa had recovered from the effects of her cruel punishment, was there any reason to hope that she could live under the privations, and the sufferings, and the ignominy to be endured in that desolate region? She who had been brought up in the enjoyment of all life's luxuries—she who



had been loved and served as a superior being, and whose years had passed away calmly and beautifully, how could she outlive the fearful blows which had been so relentlessly inflicted—exposed to the coarse rude jests of the brutal Russian soldiery, and perhaps kept constantly at hard and painful labor? What an ice-bolt shot through Raphael's heart as he shudderingly asked himself—"and does she yet live?" There was every probability that she had sunk under the load of her misfortunes, and as this thought pressed closer and closer upon him, Raphael shrank with timid apprehension from the certainty which he might soon expect.

He reached Tobolsk towards the end of March, and notwithstanding all his impatience to commence his search he deemed it necessary to lull suspicion by employing himself for some time in his commercial avocations. Yet in secret he made every inquiry that might facilitate his great enterprise.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ON their arrival at Tobolsk, Bialewski and his daughter were confined for some time in the common prison, at the disposal of the Governor, who was to make known to them the final intentions of the Emperor ; and for fifteen days they were treated with all the severity of Russian imprisonment. The worst of all was that the father and daughter had been placed in separate cells, so that they could hold no sort of communication with each other. This last stroke overwhelmed the Count with sorrow and apprehension, since he could no longer see his child, nor protect her from the merciless insults to which she was exposed. A mortal anguish preyed upon his heart, and life itself must have given way beneath the overpowering pressure had not a change occurred in the order of things, just when it was least expected. One day a message appeared to summon him before the Governor who received him with a show of politeness, and said :

“ I have to inform you of the decision of the Emperor with respect to you, and I also expect your daughter here, as she is henceforth to be associated in your fate.”

“ Oh my God ! ” exclaimed the Count, unable to restrain his joy ; “ on this condition I willingly accept whatever else I may have to bear.”

“Yes, truly, it is a very great favor which our gracious sovereign has conferred upon you, and he wishes thereby to let you see that his generous heart can feel even for rebellious subjects. Nevertheless, you have committed a grievous offence against his imperial authority, and you are about to learn your final punishment. But here comes your daughter.”

Just then Rosa entered, and was instantly folded in her father's arms; she, too, had feared that they were to meet no more on earth, and now when she saw him again—when his protecting arm once more encircled her, she wept like a child in the excess of her joy, until even the Governor was touched by the sight of such pure and devoted affection.

“Madame!” said he, “this happiness at least may still be yours, and I would it were in my power to restore to you in like manner all that you have lost.”

“Oh sir!” returned Rosa, with a grateful smile, “we can willingly sacrifice to our country that rank and fortune which we have lost—we only desire to be left together in our exile.”

“You shall have that consolation then,” resumed the Governor, who could not help admiring the lofty courage, and calm resignation of one so young and apparently so delicate. “So now, my lord the Count! I shall at once let you know the orders which I have received. His Majesty, in consideration of your former rank, will dispense with your labor and that of your

daughter, in the mines with the other criminals. You shall be in some sort restored to liberty, and may live as would a colonist. Still, as your estates are confiscated to the crown, you must earn your bread '*with the sweat of your brow*'—for I am positively forbidden to render you any pecuniary assistance. In fact, his Majesty considers that he stretches his indulgence too far when he does not send you to the mines. So now you can choose your dwelling either in Tobolsk or within the circuit of a league beyond it. You will, however, bear in mind that I am never to lose sight of you or your movements."

The Count bowed in silence, and withdrew with his daughter. He was, then, free, and his child was restored to him—favours of which he had not had the slightest expectation. Alas! he was soon undeceived as to the fancied clemency of the Czar. True he was free in Tobolsk, but in a state of the most complete destitution. With much difficulty he discovered, beyond the gates of the city, a small hut which might serve to shelter himself and his daughter from the rigor of the climate. The next thing was to seek some employment which would furnish some of the necessaries of life, but this was no easy task for one who had fallen under the Emperor's displeasure. So great was the fear of displeasing the authorities that it extinguished all sense of pity for the sufferings of the unhappy exiles. On the other hand



the Count, already advanced in years, knew not what work to apply for; and yet he had not a moment to lose, for already the beautiful face of his beloved child grew pale and thin for want of food. He went from house to house offering to give lessons, and to take charge of the education of children, but his services were everywhere rejected. Weak and exhausted, he was obliged to return to his miserable shed, where Rosa met him with a smile of ineffable sweetness, and said in a voice subdued to calmness:

"I have been just thinking, my dear father, that perhaps I might be more successful than you have been in awakening the compassion of these people. Will you permit me to make the attempt?—something tells me that I shall have good success."

"What! you, my child! expose yourself to the jibes and insults of these hard-hearted citizens? No! never can I consent to such a thing!"

"My father," replied Rosa, with celestial sweetness, "we must humble ourselves to the lowest, and courageously adore the holy will of God. Be assured that he will draw us from this abyss of wretchedness, provided we show ourselves worthy of his mercy by our un murmuring resignation. Give me only an hour or two, and you shall see that I will bring you good news."

Rosa then presented herself at the doors of

several houses, one after the other, but with no greater success than her father, as no one would venture to employ an exile. Yet some relief must be obtained in order to preserve life, and to save her father from the racking torment of seeing her whom he loved better than himself suffering the pangs of hunger. Conquering by a heroic effort, the grievous repugnance wherewith she could not but regard begging, she resolutely held out her hand and solicited alms, in a low trembling voice, for she feared that they who had refused to employ her would not give any gratuitous aid. But this time they did not refuse, for it would have been next to impossible to see such a sight without being moved to compassion; besides, some pieces of money given in secret could not compromise any one. Having thus obtained a small sum, Rosa returned to her father with an assured smile, carefully concealing the means by which it had been acquired. Day by day she went out, under pretence of seeking employment, though the fact was that the noble girl, finding that employment would not be given her, went from door to door begging that bread which was to save her father's life and her own. Assuredly she would have preferred death a thousand times, but she thought of her father, and she thought of her God, who had not, when on earth, "a spot whereon to lay his head," and she drew from the remembrance a sort of strength which enabled her to persevere. But

such humility and resignation were not to go unrewarded. Having presented herself one day at the office of a rich merchant who was also a banker, she began as she always did, by asking some employment for herself or her father. The banker much interested by the noble bearing of the young suppliant, asked "in what way she or her father could make themselves useful?"

"My father, sir," said Rosa modestly, "can undertake the situation of clerk or accountant, and for myself, I would give lessons to young ladies in music and French, with other branches of education."

The merchant seemed to reflect for some minutes, then making a sign for Rosa to await his return, he went out. In a short time he reappeared with his wife and two young girls. Having interrogated the young stranger, this gentleman and his wife quickly discovered that she was well able to perform what she undertook, and they requested her to bring her father to them. Next day both father and daughter were engaged—the Count as office-clerk, and Rosa as governess to the young ladies. It is true the remuneration was miserably small, for the merchant had not failed to take advantage of their necessitous condition; but they, who were only too much rejoiced to obtain any little certainty, thankfully accepted the offered conditions. In order not to compromise himself or his family, the banker had stipulated that the

father and daughter should not live in his house, so every evening they repaired to their wretched hovel, each concealing from the other the privations and the hardships which they had to endure.

Let us now return to Raphael, whom we left prosecuting his secret inquiries after the beloved exiles. Adroitly availing himself of his character of a travelling merchant, he took every opportunity of acquiring information. Little was to be learned in that way, however, for no one wished to speak on the subject of politics, or to hazard any remarks on the condition of any of the exiles. He then watched his opportunity to converse with some one of those unfortunate Poles who wandered in the streets houseless and homeless. Accordingly, having one day encountered a young man, apparently about twenty years of age, whose dark, animated countenance at once announced him as a son of Poland, Raphael contrived to bring him to his own lodgings.

"My friend," said he, "are you a Pole?"

"Yes, that I am!" rejoined the other, "what would you of me?"

"Most probably you were sent here for being implicated in the last rebellion—am I right?"

"Rebellion!" repeated the youth with indignant emphasis, "I can never recognise as rebellion the generous efforts of an entire nation to shake off the dread yoke of foreign tyranny!"

"Nor can I," exclaimed Raphael, with an entire change of manner, and holding out his



hand to the noble youth; "but in our present position it behoves us to understand the opinions of those to whom we speak, particularly if we would speak of political events, or persons therein concerned. I, too, am a Pole, and I wish to know if you can tell me where the Count Bialewski now is,—for I am sure you are acquainted with his name!"

"What Pole is there who knows not that honored name?" returned the young man. "Yes, I can tell you something about him, and about his daughter, too, for they are both employed in a merchant's house here in this city, and I can show it to you in a day or two, when I have inquired of some of my comrades who have had occasion to see my lord the Count!"

"By obtaining this information for me as soon as you possibly can, you will confer on me a very great favor. And now how can I serve you?"

"By giving me your esteem!"

"Oh! as to that I will go farther," said Raphael, "for my friendship shall be yours; but suffer me to offer you this purse—you may find its contents most useful here, and you will not, I hope, refuse it, for I offer it not as a gift, but as a debt due to a brother in distress."

"Since such are your sentiments, sir, I will accept your friendly offer, with the intention of sharing your donation with my companions in misfortune. And now farewell, sir, I must be

off, lest so long an interview with an exile might bring suspicion on you."

Raphael was now completely relieved of his month-long burden of anxiety. Rosa and her father both lived, and in a few days he hoped to see them and speak with them. While musing on this delightful prospect, he never gave a thought to the many dangers and difficulties still to be met and surmounted before he could attain his end. But when the first fervor of his rejoicing had cooled down to sober reason, he could shut his eyes to these things as he had done. Having once obtained an interview with the Count, and come to an understanding with him on what was to be done, it would be absolutely necessary to act with promptitude, so that the Russian police might have no time to thwart the execution of their plans. Raphael, therefore, lost not a moment in making those arrangements which might facilitate their proposed escape. In the first place (as quitting Tobolsk was by no means difficult) it was to be considered whither they would bend their course so as to escape from the vast empire of Russia. At one time it had occurred to Raphael that he could avail himself still of his passport, and with Rosa as his wife, and to pass her father as a servant, they might go through the Russian dominions as easily and as securely as he had come when alone. But this plan was scarcely a moment entertained, for the passport made no mention of wife or domestic, and besides, as the flight of the two exiles would

he quickly spread abroad, there was but little chance of their not being detected. And yet what other plan could be devised? The map of all the Russias was open before Raphael's eyes, and he considered it over and over, hoping to discover some surer way to elude the pursuit of the enemy. Following the line of the Ural mountains, the natural barrier between Siberia and Russia in Europe, he came out on those immense *steppes* which stretch from the shores of the Caspian to those of the Black Sea. This route would be at least one half shorter than that by which Raphael had reached Tobolsk, and that in itself was a great advantage. Moreover, it lay through regions entirely uninhabited, or peopled by Oriental tribes, who still retained their primitive mode of life, wandering about with their flocks from pasture to pasture. It also occurred to Raphael that, in order to keep up his character as a commercial traveller, it would be well to go as soon as possible to a celebrated fair which was held at Tebit, within a short distance of the Ural chain. That fair was attended by all the Asiatic tribes who acknowledged the dominion of the Czar, and by other nations of those regions who went to Tebit to dispose of the varied productions of their art or industry. Once there, it would be easy to make arrangements with one of those long caravans, under whose protection they might reach the Black Sea, and thence take shipping for Constantinople. Such, then, was the plan to which

Raphael turned all his attention, as presenting more and greater chances of success than any other he could project.

His object now was to get rid of as much of his merchandise as would enable him to execute his plan. With this intention he repaired to the counting-house of a sort of merchant-banker, where, under pretext of preparing for the approaching fair, he hoped to dispose of his wares for gold. He was shown into a large hall usually occupied as an office, and here he found the banker's wife, who sat at a desk making out, as it seemed, some accounts. Near the stove sat two young girls engaged at their studies, under the inspection of a governess. When Raphael had explained to the lady the object of his visit, he turned mechanically to look at the little group around the stove, and no sooner had his eye fallen on the young teacher than he recognised in her his long lost Rosa—pale she was and much emaciated—meanly clad, too, she was, but still it was Rosa—his priceless Rosa! So overpowered was he by the sudden rush of joyous surprise, that he felt himself stagger from sheer weakness, and was obliged to sit down. His eyes filled with tears as he looked on Rosa—still calm and composed, though, alas! so changed.

“You are not well, sir, I perceive,” observed the banker's wife, as she noticed his sudden faintness. These words were sufficient to excite



Rosa's attention, and she fixed her eyes on the stranger.

"Oh! it is nothing, madam," said Raphael, endeavoring to regain his composure, "nothing but a trifling pain which is already passing away."

Rosa listened, and she could not be mistaken in that voice: "My God!" she exclaimed half audibly, and getting up as though she would have rushed into Raphael's arms.

But Raphael knew too well the danger of such a recognition in such a place, and he turned towards Rosa just time enough to arrest her motion. "I thank you, Mademoiselle, you are very good; but I do not now require that you should trouble yourself about me, as I am perfectly recovered from my weakness!"

But while he spoke thus his look assured Rosa that he had recognized her, and that they would soon meet when they could speak freely. Rosa sank again on her seat, trembling with joy, but resolved to restrain her feelings lest Raphael might be compromised. So little had she looked for his appearance that she could scarcely persuade herself that all was not a dream. Fearful lest it might be so, she kept her eyes fixed on Raphael's face, observed every look and gesture of his, and followed all his motions. Yet when he retired, she was not able to return his parting look and sign, fearing that she might be observed. A little reflection sufficed to explain to her all the heroic devotion of her hus-

band, and it required all her habitual self control to conceal her rapturous joy. Her father had been sent out on business, and when he returned she tried to inform him of Raphael's arrival by signs, but as she dared not venture on even a word of explanation in such a presence, her signs and significant looks only served to excite the Count's uneasiness, still more his curiosity, for he no more than Rosa had ever dreamed of Raphael's undertaking such a journey on their account. No sooner had the clock announced the usual hour of their departure than Rosa drew her father into the street with the utmost eagerness for she longed to communicate her glad tidings.

"Father!" said she, "I have something so extraordinary to tell you that you may well doubt, as I at first did, whether I am not deceived by some visual illusion!"

"What can it be my child?—All this afternoon I saw that you were unusually restless and agitated."

"Raphael is here father!—I have seen him!"

"Raphael!—You have seen him?—how?—can it be possible?"

"Yes, my dearest father! I saw him as plainly as I now see you!" She then related the particulars of her strange meeting with Raphael, while the Count listened with almost stupid wonder, scarcely daring to credit what he had heard. But other evidence was forthcoming, for they were scarcely an hour at home when

a quick, loud knocking was heard at the door.

“Great God! It is Raphael himself!” cried Rosa, as she ran to open the door. Breathless and trembling she threw back the frail door, when Raphael caught her in his arms, and the Count encircled both in his embrace. For some time not a word was spoken, for each wept in silence as the memory of the past came back with double force. But, after a little while, this sadness passed away in the returning sense of present happiness, and many a question was mutually asked and answered on the events of the melancholy months since they parted. It was not long till Raphael spoke of his plans, and of the hopes he entertained of their success. The Count entirely approved of their escaping rather through the Asiatic regions, as the Russian police would never think of pursuing them in that direction; and even if they were pursued, it would then be comparatively easy to conceal themselves. It was then the opening of Spring, and in a few days after, our travellers set out, mounted on excellent horses, for Tebit where by means of some presents to certain merchants, they were received into a caravan of Armenian merchants who engaged to leave them in safety at a port of the Black Sea. They reached their destination without any interruption, the police having, as they had expected, pursued them on the other route. They arrived at Constantinople in good health and

spirits, and full of gratitude to Him who had brought them forth from bondage, for now they had nothing to fear from the vengeance of their enemies. Having reposed some time in the city of the Sultan, they set out for Italy and took up their residence in Rome, the common home of all faithful Catholics. When there, Raphael speedily wrote to his kind host at Culm, who lost no time in transmitting the treasure left in his keeping. Happily and tranquilly passed the days and the years with these noble exiles, though they never lost sight of their unfortunate country or ceased to implore for her the protection of that God who rules the nations, and who breaks the sceptre of kings in the day of wrath. But He is patient, because all time is his, and because he is eternal, and when it seems meet to his infinite wisdom He will avenge the wrongs of Poland and raise her again to her place amongst the kingdoms of the earth!

THE END.



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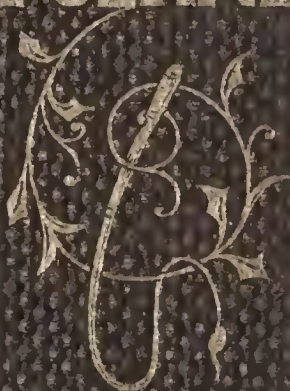








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